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From Individualized Instruction to Individualized Instruction: An Historical Study of the Path followed by Reading Instruction in the United States from Colonial Times to the Present

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FROM INDIVIDUALIZED INSTRUCTION TO INDIVIDUALIZED INSTRUCTION

An Historical Study of the Path Followed
by Reading Instruction in the
United States from
Colonial Times
to the Present

A Thesis Presented to
the Faculty of the Graduate School
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In Partial Fulfillment
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Master of Arts in Education

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by
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Rebus cunctis inest quidam velut orbis.

"In all things there is a kind of law of cycles."

Tacitus

Annales. III.

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CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM AND DEFINITIONS OF TERMS USED

A Roman named Tacitus once said: "In all things there is a kind of law of cycles."[1] This statement has meaning for the field of reading instruction; for there is, at the present time, evidence to indicate that reading instruction may complete a cycle in the future. In colonial times reading instruction was individualized. Today the most widely discussed trend in the teaching of reading is individualized reading. The individualized instruction of today, however, is qualitatively different from that of colonial times.

I. THE PROBLEM

Statement of the problem. It was the purpose of this thesis to present an historical study to show (1) that there is evidence to indicate that reading instruction may complete a cycle (from individualized instruction to individualized instruction), but (2) that the individualized instruction

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[1] Tacitus, Annales, III, 55, cited by Kate Louise Roberts, Hoyt's New Cyclopedia of Practical Quotations (revised edition; New York: Funk & Wagnalls Company, 1927), p. 434.

of today is qualitatively different from that of colonial days.

Figure 1 on page 3 is a schematic diagram showing the path that reading instruction in the United States has followed from colonial times to the present. (The diagram presents only the path that has been followed by reading instruction and should not be construed to mean that one form of instruction grew out of another.) Figure 1 provides at a glance a symbolic outline of the entire thesis. Each symbol in the figure represents a "milestone" in the history of reading instruction in this country:

1. The hornbook symbolizes the fact that the individualized reading in the dame school was, at least in part, the result of the scarcity of teaching materials.

2. The three books represent the individualized instruction in the district school, which was made necessary, at least in part, by the multiplicity of textbooks.

3. The semicircle symbolizes the method of instruction in the monitorial school where a monitor took his charges to a "station" at the wall and taught them from charts.

4. The busts of three children together represent the type of group instruction employed in the graded schools when they were first established. The fact that the three busts are connected is indicative of the notion common at that time that all students were alike and had the same educational needs.

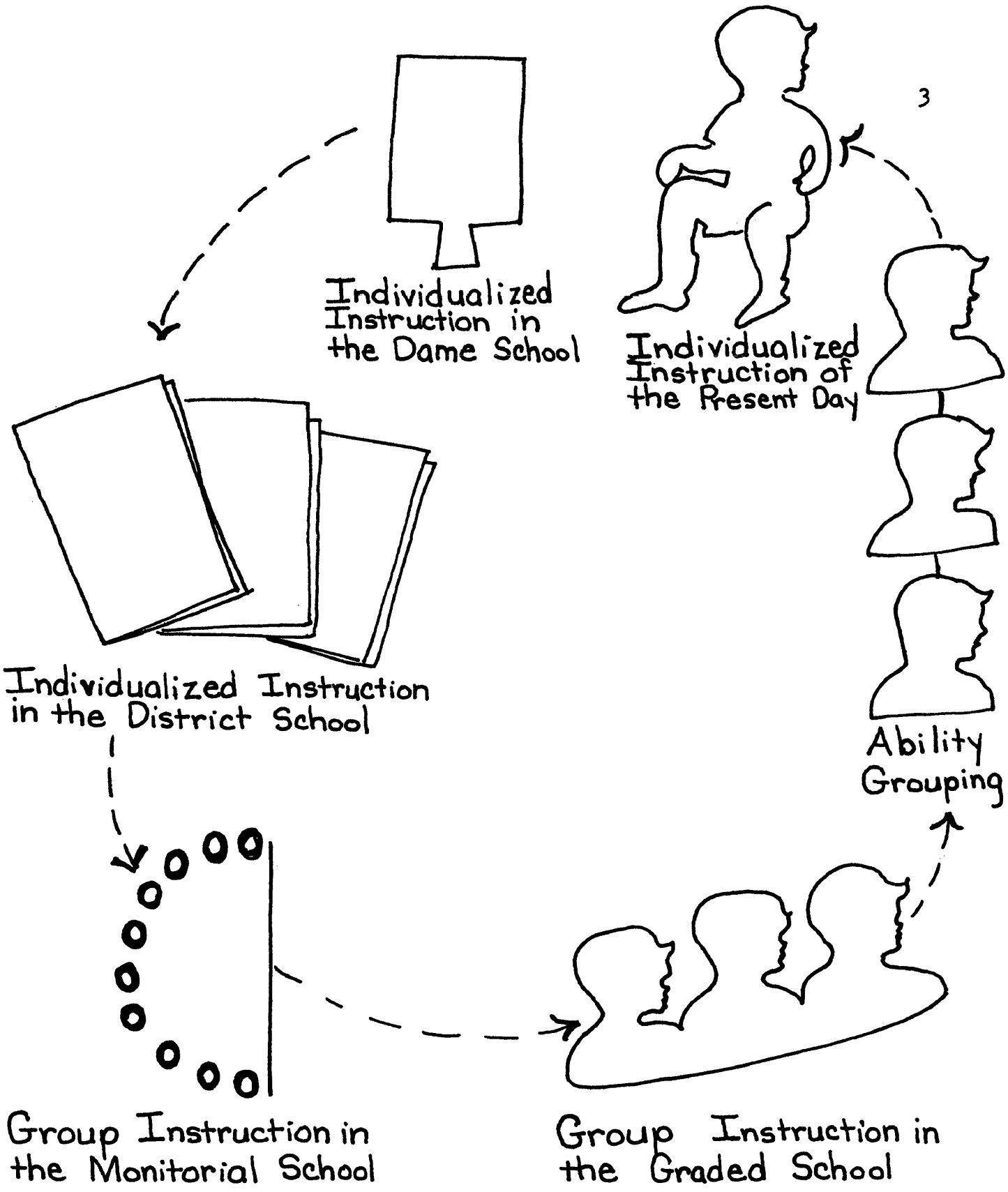

FIGURE 1

A SCHEMATIC DIAGRAM SHOWING THE PATH THAT READING INSTRUCTION IN THE UNITED STATES HAS FOLLOWED FROM COLONIAL TIMES TO THE PRESENT

5. The three separated busts symbolize ability grouping. The busts are separated to indicate that, when ability grouping is used, students are separated into groups according to reading ability. The busts are three in number and are placed one above the other to symbolize the common practice of having three reading groups: one of below-average ability, one of average ability, and one of above-average ability.

6. The figure of the child alone symbolizes the individualized instruction of today in which each student is regarded as an individual who is not exactly like any other individual in the world and who must, therefore, have his instruction adjusted to his own development.

7. It will be noted that there is a gap between the hornbook and the child. The gap shows that reading instruction has not yet completed a cycle, although there is evidence that it may do so in the future.

8. The fact that the individualized instruction of colonial times is represented by the hornbook and the individualized instruction of today is represented by a child is indicative of the qualitative difference between the individual instruction of colonial times and the individual instruction of today.

Importance of the study. Artley has pointed out that "extreme points of view in philosophy and method are not new to education . . ." and that "pendulums have a characteristic way of swinging to extremes. . . ."[2] For these reasons a

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[2]A. Sterl Artley, "An Eclectic Approach to Reading," Elementary English: A Magazine of the Language Arts, (May, 1961), 321.

teacher needs to have an understanding of the history of reading instruction (including a knowledge of the methods that have been used in teaching reading in the past and an understanding of why those methods were used) in order to evaluate properly new methods that are advocated. Only if she can objectively evaluate each method in terms of its value to herself and to her students can the teacher take full advantage of the good points of all methods or techniques (the eclectic approach). Heilman has clearly expressed the need for viewing teaching methods in their proper perspective:

> . . . If a teacher begins to take sides in methodological squabbles or if she begins to crystalize her ideas on an either/or basis, she is likely to be less receptive to other points of view and approaches which may be helpful to her in teaching some of the children in her class.[3]

II. DEFINITIONS OF TERMS USED

Ability grouping. Ability grouping is a plan whereby students are divided according to some criteria of achievement and/or learning ability into groups (usually three groups) comprising below-average, average, and above-average

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[3]Arthur W. Heilman, Principles and Practices of Teaching Reading (Columbus, Ohio: Charles E. Merrill Books, Inc., 1961), p. 9.

students.

Ability grouping may take one of two forms. When it takes the form of homogeneous grouping within a heterogeneous group, the students within any one classroom represent a wide variety of academic ability. These students are divided into reading groups according to reading ability. A classroom of this type usually has three reading groups representing three levels of ability: a group of below-average readers, a group of average readers, and a group of above-average readers.

When ability grouping takes the form of homogeneous grouping, the students are divided into classrooms on the basis of ability (usually I.Q. or reading ability). Under this plan all of the students in a given classroom are, at least in theory, of approximately equal reading ability. When this plan is used, there are often three classrooms at each grade level in each school: one composed of below-average readers, one composed of average readers, and one composed of above-average readers.

Monitorial school. The monitorial school was so called because pupils, called "monitors," were appointed to teach the other students. Monitorial schools were also referred to as "mutual instruction schools" because the pupils taught each

other. The schools, which were patterned after a plan devised by Joseph Lancaster, were also called Lancastrian schools in honor of the English schoolmaster.

Individual instruction. For the purposes of this study, "individual instruction" was taken to mean instruction on a one-to-one basis between the teacher and one pupil. It differs from individualised reading in that individual instruction is the larger concept of which individualized reading is one facet. In other words, individualised reading is always a form of individual instruction; but not all individual instruction is individualised reading.

Individualized reading. Individualized reading is "a way of organizing the classroom. . . ."[4] It is characterized by the following:

1. Self-selection of material by pupils for their own instruction.
2. Individual conferences between each pupil and the teacher.
3. Groups organised for other than reasons of ability or proficiency in reading.

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[4]Helen M. Robinson, "News and Comment: Individualised Reading," The Elementary School Journal, LX (May, 1960), 411.

4. Pacing.[5]

Basal or basic reader. Good has defined the basal or basic reader as "a textbook, usually of a graded series, used for instruction in reading."[6] The modern basal reader has a controlled vocabulary; i.e., the words are introduced gradually to ensure learning and the words are repeated several times to reinforce learning. Figure 2 on page 9 shows a basal reader (from the Ginn series) on the first grade level.

Trade book. A trade book, according to the definition given by Good, is "a book published for the purpose of giving the reader pleasure and of feeding his interest in reading for pleasure."[7] Robinson has defined trade books as "stories written especially for children."[8] They come in all shapes and sizes and cover a wide range of interests and reading abilities. Several trade books are shown in Figure 3 on page 9.

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[5]May Lazar, "Individualized Reading: A Dynamic Approach," Journal of Educational Research, XI (December, 1957), 77; and Jeannette Veatch, Individualizing Your Reading Program (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1959), p. ix.

[6]Carter V. Good (ed.), Dictionary of Education (second edition; New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1959), p. 442.

[7]Ibid., p. 64.

[8]Robinson, loc. cit.

FIGURE 2

A BASAL READER ON THE
FIRST GRADE LEVEL

FIGURE 3

SEVERAL TRADE BOOKS

III. ORGANIZATION OF THE REMAINDER OF THE THESIS

Reading instruction in the United States has been closely related to the development of the school in this country. For that reason a brief history of the elementary school in America from the dame school through the evolution of the grade school is included in Appendix A, pages 143-166, for the convenience of the reader.

The remainder of the body of the thesis is organized as follows:

1. The individualized reading instruction in the schools of early America.
2. The introduction of group instruction and graded material.
3. Group instruction in the graded school.
4. The advent and development of ability grouping.
5. The individualized instruction of today.
6. Summary, generalizations, conclusion, and application of findings.

CHAPTER II

THE INDIVIDUALIZED READING INSTRUCTION IN THE SCHOOLS OF EARLY AMERICA

For a period of approximately 250 years (from the early part of the seventeenth century to about the middle of the nineteenth century) reading instruction in the schools of America was of the individualized type. This chapter presents a description of the individualized methods used, statements concerning some of the reasons why these methods were used, a description of the main instruments used in teaching reading, statements concerning other aspects of the reading programs of the district and dame schools, and comments concerning the effectiveness of the individualized methods employed.

I. READING INSTRUCTION IN THE DAME SCHOOL

The petty or dame school was a European institution which was transplanted to this country from the homeland by the early settlers of the New England Colonies.[1] The dame school was usually kept in the kitchen or living room of a

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[1]For a further description of the early dame school, see Appendix A, pages 144-147.

home by some woman who, having obtained the rudiments of an education in her youth, desired to earn a few cents. It was here that the neighborhood children learned the alphabet and the beginnings of reading and spelling.[2]

Instruments of instruction. The hornbook was the commonest instrument used in teaching beginning reading in early colonial times. Arbuthnot has given the following description of the hornbook:

> These were not books at all but little wooden paddles on which were pasted lesson sheets. These sheets were covered over with transparent horn and bound along the edges by strips of brass. Most of the hornbooks were two and three-fourths by five inches. The lesson sheets of vellum or parchment began with a cross followed by the alphabet, sometimes in both large and small letters and sometimes with syllables: ab, eb, ib, and other vowel and consonant combinations. There would probably be "in the Name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost" and the Lord's prayer. The context of the hornbooks differed, but in general they were designed to teach the child his letters and their combinations, and to continue his religious instruction.[3]

Figure 4 on page 13 shows the commonest size and shape of the hornbook.

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[2]Ellwood P. Cubberley, Public Education in the United States: A Study and Interpretation of American Educational History (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1934), p. 27; and Edward W. Knight, Education in the United States (third revised edition; Boston: Ginn and Company, 1951), p. 120.

[3]May Hill Arbuthnot, Children and Books (Chicago: Scott, Foresman and Company, 1957), p. 39.

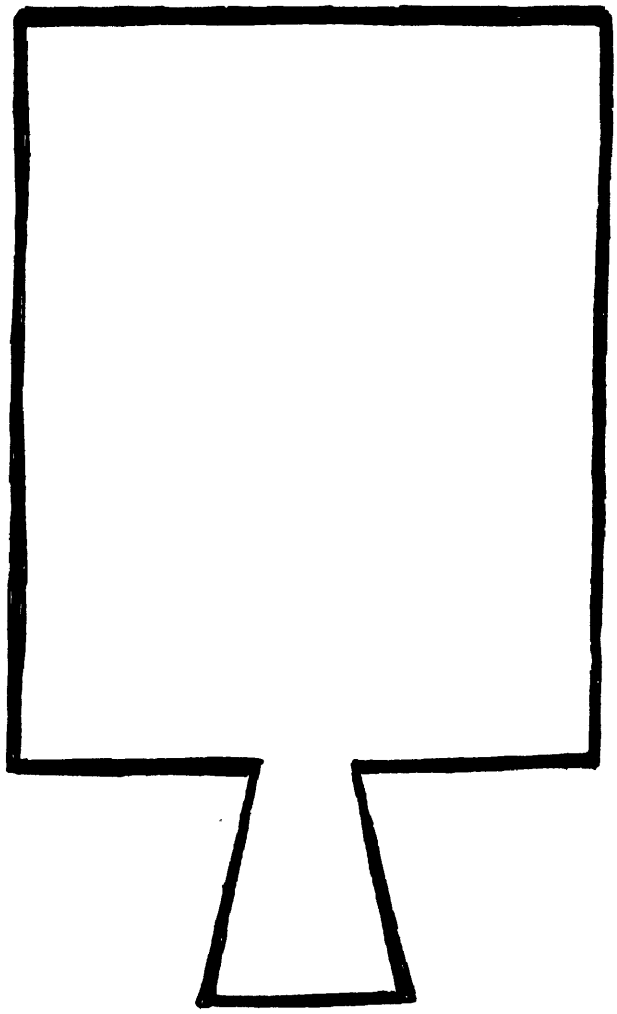

FIGURE 4

THE COMMONEST SIZE AND SHAPE
OF THE HORNBOOK

A new instrument for the teaching of reading appeared in the colonies in about 1691. This was The New England Primer, a small book that was usually 2½ by 4½ inches in size.[4] (Figure 5 on page 15 contrasts the size of The New England Primer with the size of a modern primer.) The horn-book, which, according to Smith, probably went completely out of use in America about the middle of the eighteenth century,[5] was replaced by The New England Primer as the main instrument of reading instruction. Johnson has given a detailed description of the contents of this small book:

> Every primer had a page devoted to the alphabet, followed by two pages of those curious word fragments, "ab, eb, ib, ob, ub," etc., which the book itself calls "Easy syllables for Children." Then came three pages of words grading up from those of one syllable to "a-bo-mi-na-ti-on"[6] and a few others of six syllables. The rest of the book is almost entirely a religious and moral miscellany of verse and prose gathered from all sorts of sources. Prominent in this miscellany is a picture alphabet--a series of twenty-four tiny pictures, each accompanied by a two or three line jingle. . . . One must grant that the

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[4] Nila Banton Smith, American Reading Instruction: Its Development and Its Significance in Gaining a Perspective on Current Practices in Reading (New York: Silver, Burdett and Company, 1934), p. 20.

[5] Ibid., p. 17.

[6] It was not until about the end of the eighteenth century that "tion" was regarded as one syllable rather than two. The letters "tion" came to be regarded as one syllable through the efforts of Noah Webster, who tried to simplify the American spelling system.

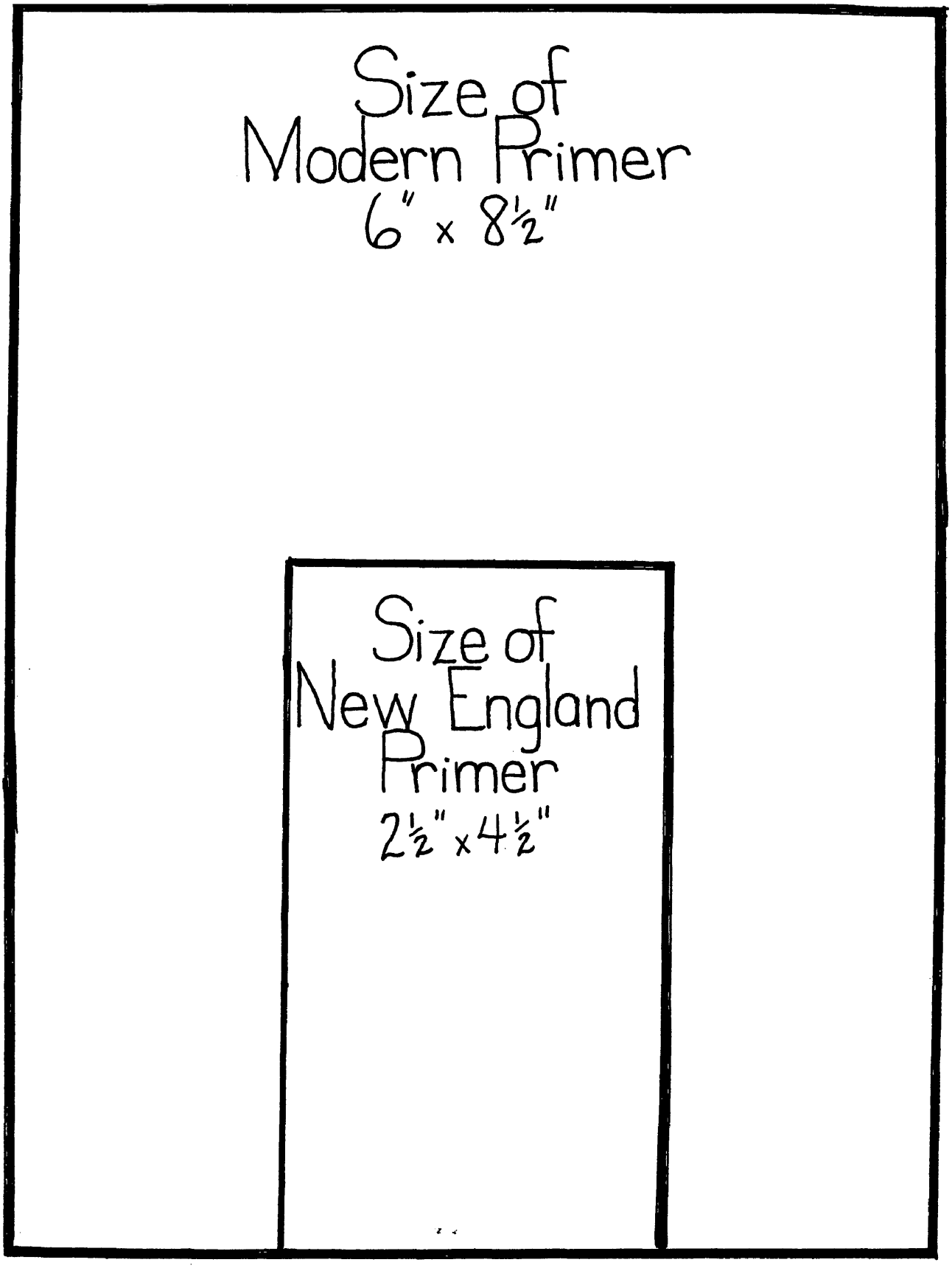

FIGURE 5

A COMPARISON OF THE SIZE OF
THE NEW ENGLAND PRIMER
AND A MODERN PRIMER

> pictures are expressive in spite of their diminutive size. The artist took care to get everything he could into them that would help the text. . . .[7]

Although other primers appeared on the market, The New England Primer was by far the most popular. In fact, this small book held the number one position in sales until it was "dethroned" by Webster's American Spelling Book after 1783.[8]

Methods of instruction. The alphabet approach to the teaching of reading and individualized instruction were the salient features of reading instruction in the dame school.

Writing in 1612, Brinsley described the common method of beginning reading instruction:

> The usual way to begin a child when he is first brought to Schoole is to teach him to know his letters in the Horn-book, where he is made to run over all the letters in the Alphabet or Christ-cross row both forwards and backwards, until he can tell any of them, which is pointed at. . . .[9]

The alphabet method of teaching reading has been severely criticized by present-day educators. The following comment by Adams, et. al., is fairly representative of the

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[7]Clifton Johnson, Old-Time Schools and School-Books (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1925), p. 76.

[8]Edwin Grant Dexter, A History of Education in the United States (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1922), p. 211.

[9]Smith, op. cit., p. 31.

attitude held today toward the alphabet method:

> . . . It is all too apparent that during the colonial period John and Priscilla started reading by learning that " a" is "a" and that "b" is "b." What thoughts the letters of the alphabet aroused is not a matter of record. But after the children had mastered their ABC's, they were allowed the inestimable boon of fitting letters together to form syllables, such as "ac," "ec," "ic," "oc," "uc," etc. Here again, we are left in doubt concerning the meaning which the children were able to extract from this gibberish.[10]

Why did the teachers of colonial days use such a method? It may be that some of them used the alphabet method because they thought it was the most desirable way of teaching reading. In 1612 Brinsley pleaded for the use of the alphabet method because he believed it to be so desirable:

> . . . He pointed out the desirability not only of having the child learn the A B C by rote, forwards and backwards but also of requiring him to point out which is a, b, c, d, or any other letter, first in the alphabet, then "in any other place."[11]

But, as Dunn has pointed out, it is probable that most of the teachers of that day used the alphabet method because

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[10]Fay Adams, et. al., Teaching Children To Read (New York: Ronald Press Company, 1949), p. 43.

[11]Smith, op. cit., p. 31.

they knew no better. Teacher training had not yet been developed, and many of the dames who held school in their homes knew little more than the students they taught.[12]

No statements can be found with regard to how desirable the colonial teachers thought individualized instruction was. It can be shown, however, that scarcity of material sometimes made the use of the individualized method necessary. Perhaps it can never be determined which of the two factors (desirability of method on the one hand and scarcity of material on the other) exerted the greater influence in causing colonial teachers to use the individualized method.

Dexter has commented on the scarcity of material in the dame school as follows:

> There were no desks, maps, blackboards, nor any other equipment for schoolkeeping, save a teacher,--who in many cases knew little beyond the letters she was teaching,--and perhaps a single copy [italics not in the original] of the horn book. . . .[13]

Materials to be used for reading instruction were scarce during colonial days because most of them had to be

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[12]Dr. Joseph Dunn, Associate Professor of Elementary Education, Omaha University. Permission to quote secured.

[13]Dexter, op. cit., p. 425.

shipped from England. Very few educational materials were printed in this country during its early days:

> Although a printing press had been set up in Cambridge as early as 1639, it did not in any way help to solve the text-book problem for more than one hundred years, since it was wholly engaged in turning out controversial pamphlets of a religious nature. It is not strange, therefore, that the needs of the elementary schools were overlooked.[14]

II. READING INSTRUCTION IN THE DISTRICT SCHOOL

When the colonists first came to America, they lived in small, compact towns. Originally the New Englanders were held together by ". . . fear of savages, religious fervor, the strong feeling of social unity, and the method of granting land by the town, as well as the tradition of the mother country. . . ."[15] Gradually, however, these influences lost their strength. In addition, the population began to increase. The result was that by the beginning of the eighteenth century the population of New England had begun

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[14] Ibid., pp. 208-209.

[15] Paul Monroe, Founding of the American Public School System (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1940), p. 118.

to spread out over the land.[16] Consequently, ". . . many, living at a distance from the village, were now unable, particularly in bad weather, to send their children to the town school which they were taxed to support."[17] The district school was organized to meet the needs of those people living outside the town.[18, 19]

Instruments of instruction. It was pointed out on pages 18-19 that most of the materials used for reading instruction in the dame school were transported from England. Such an arrangement proved to be sufficiently satisfactory until the advent of the Revolutionary War. The coming of the war meant an end to trade between England and the colonies of America. It was necessary for America to fall back upon her own resources in order to fill the need for textbooks.

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[16] Ibid.

[17] Ibid.

[18] Ibid.

[19] For a further description of the district school, see Appendix A, pages 147-153.

Americans were equal to the occasion. One man of the day was particularly outstanding. This man was Noah Webster, author of The American Spelling Book. This book was first published in 1783 under the formidable title, The First Part of a Grammatical Institute of the English Language. Webster later changed the name to The American Spelling-book, and still later (1829) to The Elementary Spelling-book. Because the speller was usually covered with blue paper, it was commonly called "The Old Blue-back" or "Webster's Blue-backed Speller."[20]

Webster's speller was so popular that by 1880 it had sold over 80,000,000 copies.[21] The following statement by Johnson shows just how popular The American Spelling Book was:

> . . . During the twenty years its author was engaged in preparing his dictionary, 1807-1827, the profits from that one little school-book furnished the entire support of his family, though his copy-right receipts were less than a cent a book. The sales went on increasing up to the time of Mr. Webster's death, at the age of eighty-four. A million copies annually were then being called for. . . .[22]

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[20] Johnson, op. cit., pp. 169-175.

[21] Cubberley, op. cit., p. 291.

[22] Johnson, op. cit., pp. 168-169.

A copy of the 1857 revision of "Old Blue-back" is shown in Figure 6 on page 23. The book contains 152 lessons which rapidly become more difficult. Lesson 1 contains two-letter syllables such as:

ba	be	bi	bo	bu	by
ca	ce	ci	co	cu	cy
da	de	di	do	du	dy
fa	fe	fi	fo	fu	fy
ga	ge	gi	go	gu	gy[23]

Lessons 2 and 3 contain short sentences (which do not even begin with capital letters) composed of three and four words:

is he in?	do go on.	is it on?
is he to go?	is it by us?	we go to it.[24]

The words in lesson 81 are only three syllables long, but rather difficult:

subversive protrusive dissuasive revengeful[25]

Some of the sentences found in the same lesson include:

> Perspective glasses are such as we look through, to see things at a distance. Telescopes are perspective glasses.
> Putrid bodies emit an offensive smell.[26]

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[23]Noah Webster, The Elementary Spellingbook, Being an Improvement on the American Spelling Book (New York: American Book Company, 1857), p. 16.

[24]Ibid., p. 17.

[25]Ibid., p. 66.

[26]Ibid., p. 67.

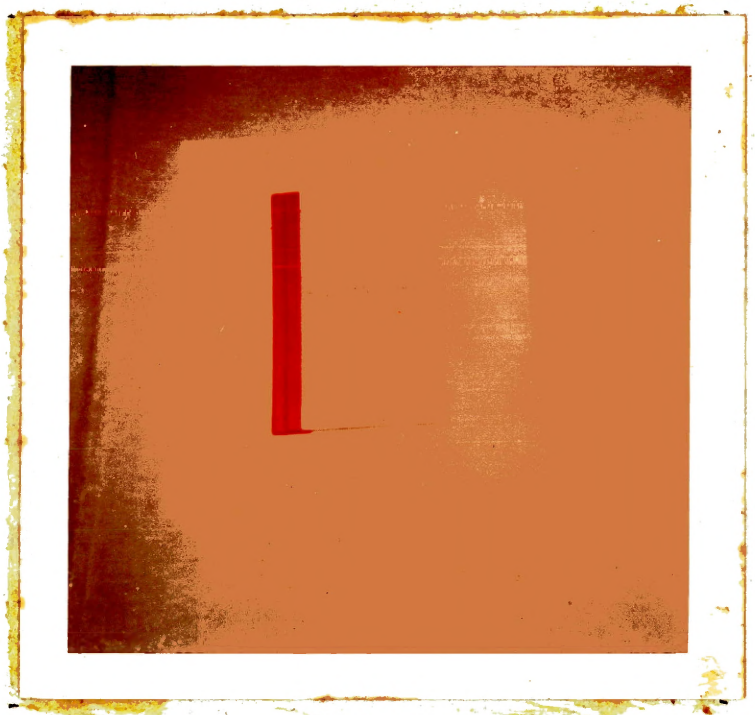

FIGURE 6

A COPY OF THE 1857 REVISION
OF "OLD BLUE-BACK"

Lesson 146 is composed of seven fables, the difficulty of which can be seen from the following excerpt from one of them:

> A certain cat had made such unmerciful havoc among the vermin of her neighborhood, that not a single rat or mouse dared venture to appear abroad. Puss was soon convinced that if affairs remained in their present state, she must ere long starve. After mature deliberation, therefore, she resolved to have recourse to stratagem. For this purpose, she suspended herself from a hook with her head downward, pretending to be dead. The rats and mice, as they peeped from their holes, observing her in this dangling attitude, concluded she was hanging for some misdemeanor, and with great joy immediately sallied forth in quest of their prey. . . .[27]

Lesson 152 (the last lesson in the book) contains 350 "words difficult to spell," including such words as:

erysipelas bacchanalian eleemosynary[28]

It can be seen that the student had to be making giant academic strides in order to progress satisfactorily from "ba" and "be" in lesson 1 to "erysipelas" and "bacchanalian" in lesson 152.

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[27] Ibid., p. 143.

[28] Ibid., pp. 171-174.

Webster's spelling book was not the only one on the market. Other spelling books which appeared after the Revolutionary War and which were used to teach reading included:

The Child's Companion
The Child's Spelling-Book
The Columbian Spelling Book
The Columbian Primer
The New England Spelling-book
The Young Tyro's Instructer [sic]
Parsons' Analytical Spelling Book
Exercises in Orthography
Companion to Spelling-books
The Young Ladies' and Gentlemen's Spelling Book
A New Spelling-book
Analytical Spelling-book
Juvenile Spelling-book
The New York Spelling-book[29]

In addition to the spelling books there were numerous primary readers and advanced readers. Cubberley has pointed out that "almost immediately after the war a long series of native American schoolbooks began to appear."[30] Only a few of the primary and advanced readers are listed below:

Primary Readers:
- The Franklin Primer
- The Child's Instructor
- The Child's Instructer [sic] and Moral Primer
- Easy Lessons in Reading
- The Clinton Primer
- The Union Primer
- The Fourth Class Book

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[29]Johnson, op. cit., pp. 185-232.

[30]Cubberley, op. cit., p. 289.

Primary Readers continued:
A Second Book for Reading and Spelling
The Child's Picture Defining and Reading Book
The Progressive Reader or Juvenile Monitor
The Child's Guide
The Young Reader
Young Pupils' Second Book
The Christmas Primer[31]

Advanced Readers:
Grammatical Institute
The Little Reader's Assistant
Young Lady's Accidence
Child's Companion
The American Preceptor
The Columbian Orator
North American Reader
The Improved Reader
The Popular Reader[32]

No wonder Webster, in a letter (1840) to Barnard, complained:

> Indeed there is danger of running from one extreme to another, and instead of having too few books in our schools, we shall have too many.[33]

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[31] Johnson, op. cit., pp. 233-264; and Smith, op. cit., p. 60.

[32] Smith, op. cit., pp. 50-64.

[33] Letter in Barnard's American Journal of Education, XXVI, pp. 195-196, cited by Ellwood P. Cubberley, Readings in Public Education in the United States: A Collection of Sources and Readings to Illustrate the History of Educational Practice and Progress in the United States (Boston, Houghton Mifflin Company, 1934), p. 267.

Methods of instruction. Samuel G. Goodrich (or "Peter Parley" as he called himself on the title pages of the books he wrote) described his first encounter with reading in a district school as follows:

> The children were called up one by one to Aunt Delight, who sat on a low chair, and required each, as a preliminary, "to make his manners," which consisted of a small sudden nod. She then placed the spelling-book before the pupil, and with a penknife pointed, one by one, to the letters of the alphabet, saying "What's that?"
>
> I believe I achieved the alphabet that summer. . . .[34]

It can be seen from the above statement that reading instruction in the district school was individualized. In the days of the district school, as in the days of the dame school, instruction was individualized, at least in part, because of necessity. In the dame school the scarcity of books had, in certain instances, made it necessary to individualize instruction. However, the situation was the exact opposite in the case of the district school. It was pointed out on page 26 that Webster had complained about the numerous school books on the market. Such a statement sounds strange to a teacher in this day and age of numerous textbooks and even more numerous trade books. The difficulty in the

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[34]Johnson, op. cit., pp. 115-117.

district school, however, lay in the fact that "each child furnished his own book and followed his own volition or that of his parents in selecting it."[35] One can easily imagine the results. Knight has stated that "teachers were often embarrassed by having large schools with nearly every child in a separate class."[36] In his First Annual Report, Horace Mann commented:

> When a diversity of books prevails in a school there will necessarily be unfitness and maladjustment in the classification of scholars. Those who ought to recite together are separated by a difference of books. . . . Thus the teacher's time is crumbled into dust and dissipated.[37]

When so eminent an educator as Horace Mann expressed dissatisfaction with the situation, it can fairly safely be assumed that individualized instruction in reading was used in the district school, not because the educators of the day thought it to be the most effective approach, but because it was made necessary by the multiplicity of textbooks.

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[35] Monroe, op. cit., pp. 344-345.

[36] Edward W. Knight, Education in the United States (third revised edition; Boston: Ginn and Company, 1951), p. 242.

[37] Monroe, op. cit., pp. 345-346.

The alphabet approach to teaching reading was another method which had been used in the dame school and which was still used in the district school. Cubberley has pointed out that:

> . . . Reading and spelling were taught everywhere by first learning the letters, then syllables, and finally words. Children came forward to the teacher's desk and recited individually to the master or dame. . . .[38]

The use of spelling books in reading instruction was conducive to the continuation of the alphabet approach. Instruction frequently took the following form:

> . . . The master gave the signal to begin. . . to read, letter by letter, pronouncing each syllable by itself, and adding to it the preceding one till the word was complete. Thus a-d ad, m-i mi, admi, r-a ra, admira, t-i-o-n shun, admiration.[39]

During the time of the district school much emphasis in reading instruction was placed upon articulation, pronunciation, and elocution. In fact, so much emphasis was

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[38]Ellwood P. Cubberley, Public Education in the United States: A Study and Interpretation of American Educational History (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1934), p. 57.

[39]Albert C. Baugh, A History of the English Language (second edition; New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1957), p. 433.

placed upon these things that meaning was sometimes lost. "The principal requisites in reading," according to Cubberley, "were to read fast, mind the 'stops and marks,' and speak up loud."[40] Horace Mann condemned the practice of teaching the child to do eloquent oral reading without teaching him the meaning of what he was reading:

> We feel bound to say, that to suffer children to read without understanding what they read, is one of the most flagrant cases of incompetent teaching. The proper pronunciation of words according to the standard of the best speakers, is a desirable accomplishment. Distinct enunciation, the length of sounds, the pitch and power of the voice, should be attended to by all teachers; but the significance of the words,--the meaning of the author,--is primary, is principal, is indispensable. Whatever else is omitted, this must be attended to. . . .[41]

III. EVALUATION OF THE INDIVIDUALIZED INSTRUCTION IN READING EMPLOYED IN THE DAME AND DISTRICT SCHOOLS

The individualised approach to reading instruction in the dame and district schools has been severely criticised

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[40] Ellwood P. Cubberley, Public Education in the United States: A Study and Interpretation of American Educational History (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1934), p. 57.

[41] O. W. Caldwell and S. A. Courtis, Then and Now in Education: 1845-1923 (New York: World Book Company, 1924), pp. 260-261.

by Cubberley:

> The greatest waste of time came from the poor methods used in teaching and the individual methods of instruction universally followed. Reading and spelling were taught everywhere by first learning the letters, then syllables, and finally words. Children came forward to the teacher's desk and recited individually to the master or dame, and so wasteful was the process that children might attend for years and get only a mere start in reading and writing [italics not in the original]. . . .[42]

Reagan has pointed out the weakness of the individualized instruction during this period as follows:

> The "individual" aspect of this procedure may have been commendable, but the weakness of the procedure lay in the fact that there was little or no "instruction" in it. With a group of any considerable size, it is obvious that the teacher could not devote much time to each pupil's "recitation." The brief time allotted to each pupil was spent for the most part, in hearing him reproduce--often, no doubt, verbatim and without any true conception of the meaning--the textbook material that had been assigned him. . . .[43]

IV. A SUMMARY OF THE MAIN POINTS OF THE CHAPTER

Reading instruction in the dame school and in the district school was usually individualized. The students

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[42] Ellwood P. Cubberley, Public Education in the United States: A Study and Interpretation of American Educational History (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1934), p. 57.

[43] G. W. Reagan, Fundamentals of Teaching (Chicago: Scott, Foresman and Company, 1932), pp. 204-205.

came to the teacher one at a time to be taught their letters or to recite to the teacher.

Individualized reading instruction was, at least in part, the result of necessity in both the dame school and the district school. In the dame school individualized instruction was made necessary by a scarcity of instructional materials. In the district school the exact opposite situation brought about the need to employ individualized instruction; i.e., each student in the district school might have a book from which to be taught reading that was different from the reading book possessed by every other student in the school. The result was that the "instruction" was more listening to recitation than true instruction.

The alphabet approach (an approach which is usually criticized by present-day educators) was used in teaching reading in both the dame schools and the district schools.

Elocution had become the vogue by the time the district school was at its peak of popularity. This meant that enunciation and pronunciation were stressed, often to the exclusion of meaning.

CHAPTER III

THE INTRODUCTION OF GROUP INSTRUCTION AND GRADED MATERIALS

It was shown in Chapter II that reading instruction in the dame and district schools was individualized. In 1806 the first monitorial (or Lancastrian[1]) school in the United States was opened in New York. This school demonstrated to the people of America that group instruction was not only feasible, but practical. For the first time large-scale group instruction was employed in an American school.

The monitorial school affected reading instruction in two ways. First, group instruction replaced individualized instruction. Second, it accustomed the people to the idea of grading the material to be taught.[2]

I. GROUP INSTRUCTION

The monitorial school in this country was patterned after the monitorial school developed in England by a young

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[1] Also spelled "Lancasterian" by some authors.

[2] For a discussion of the origin of the monitorial school and for a more complete description of the school, see Appendix A, pages 153-163.

schoolmaster named Joseph Lancaster.[3] (For that reason the school was also known as the Lancastrian school.) Cubberley has given the following description of the group instruction used in the monitorial school:

> The essential features of the Lancastrain plan were the collection of a large number of pupils in one room, from 200 to 1000 being possible. . . . The pupils were sorted and seated in rows, and to each row was assigned a clever boy who was known as a monitor, and who was the key to the entire system. A common number for each monitor to instruct and look after was ten. The teacher first taught these monitors a lesson from a printed card, and then the monitors, "youthful corporals of the teacher's regiment," took their rows to "stations" about the wall and proceeded to teach the other boys what they had just learned.[4]

Figure 7 on page 35 is a plan of a Lancastrian monitorial schoolroom.[5] The rows of seats were down the middle. The "stations" where the monitors took their classes can be seen along the walls. The students stood in the semicircles

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[3]Ellwood P. Cubberley, Public Education in the United States: A Study and Interpretation of American Educational History (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1934), p. 129.

[4]Ibid., pp. 131-132.

[5]Figure 7 was taken from: Edgar W. Knight, Education in the United States (third revised edition; Boston: Ginn and Company, 1951), p. 164.

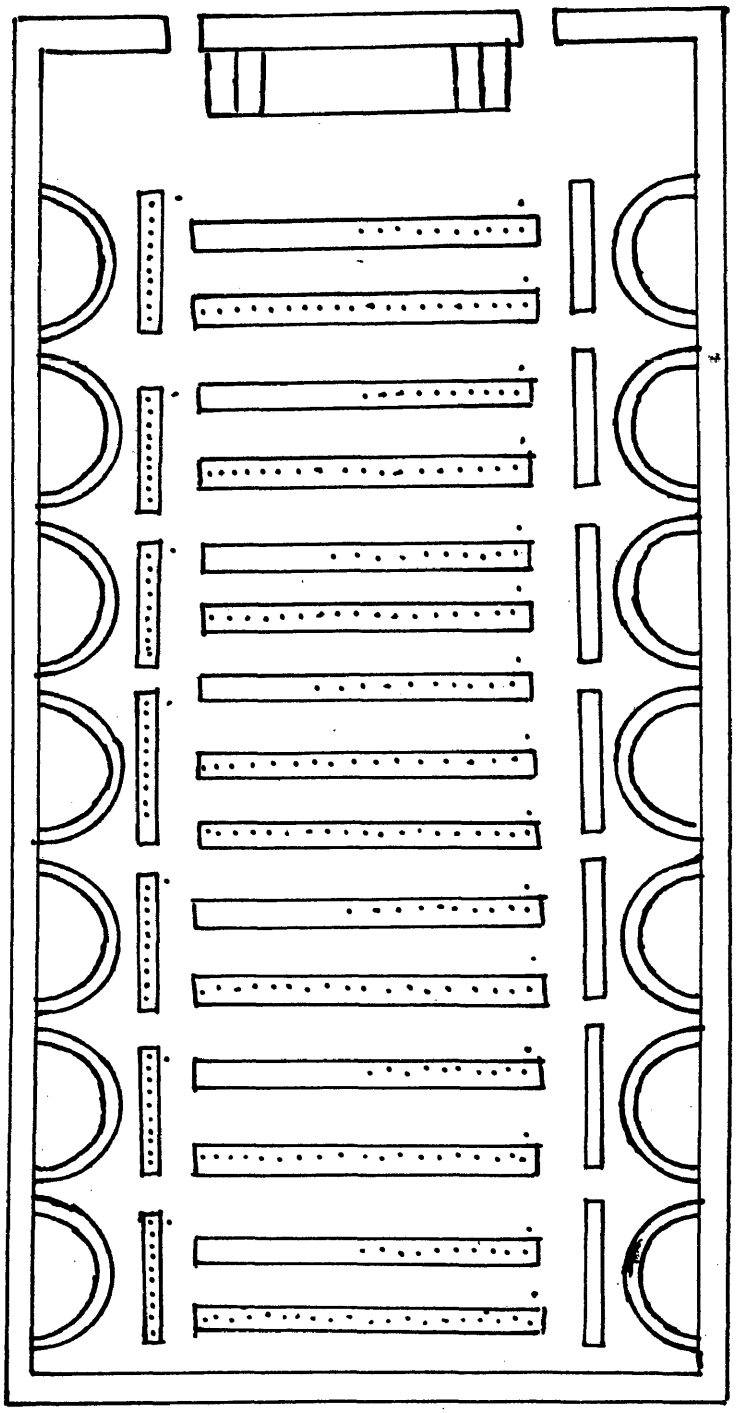

FIGURE 7

A PLAN OF A LANCASTRIAN
MONITORIAL SCHOOLROOM

facing the wall where charts were hung. It was from these charts that the monitors conducted their classes and taught their lessons. Monroe has described the technique as follows:

> . . . Lessons were printed on large battledores or charts, or written on movable (or portable) blackboards. These were suspended from hooks on the wall, and before each a group gathered under its monitor. . . .[6]

The rectangular areas in front of the semicircles in Figure 7 were used for aligning the students in straight rows. The Lancastrian school was very militaristic. "Pupils rose, marched, wheeled, sat down, and took up their books at a word of command."[7] In the figure, seven of the monitors have their charges lined up in front of the semicircles, while the rest of the students are at their seats.

Knight has pointed out that ". . . the Lancasterian method, when compared with the individual method in use in the old schools, wore the color of effectiveness."[8] Monroe has elaborated more fully on the effectiveness of the group

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[6]Paul Monroe, Founding of the American Public School System (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1940), p. 368.

[7]H. G. Good, A History of American Education (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1956), p. 136.

[8]Knight, op. cit., p. 166.

instruction introduced in the monitorial school:

> This monitorial or simultaneous method involved a great gain over the old individualistic scheme in that all of the studying as well as reciting was done under the monitor, so that practically the entire school was in operation all the time. The attention of each child was held whether in study or in recitation, both being carried on by group effort. In place of the former schoolroom of fifty to one hundred pupils, of whom a dozen or so at most were receiving attention while the rest were allowed a great variety of occupations determined by individual choice or were not occupied at all, here was a schoolroom of several hundred children, all of them actively engaged.[9]

In a public address Governor De Witt Clinton of New York made the following laudatory comment about the monitorial school:

> When I perceive that many boys in our school have been taught to read and write in two months, who did not before know the alphabet, and that even one has accomplished it in three weeks . . . I consider his [Lancaster's] system as creating a new era in education, as a blessing sent down from heaven to redeem the poor and distressed of this world from the power and dominion of ignorance.[10]

II. A MINUTELY GRADED READING PROGRAM

The monitorial school popularized the idea of grading. Monroe has pointed out:

> Little attempt was made to teach more than the rudiments of reading, writing, and arithmetic. These subjects were very minutely graded [italics

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[9] Monroe, loc. cit.

[10] Ibid., p. 370.

> not in the original] and the pupils passed from one group to another in each subject as they mastered the materials in the given stage of the organization.[11]

Who decided when a student was ready to progress from one level of difficulty to another? A monitor did. (Monitors kept track of attendance, taught the students, checked the papers, examined the students, promoted the students, and had charge of the slates or books.[12])

The reading classes were divided as follows: first class, alphabet; second class, words and syllables of two letters; third class, words and syllables of three letters; fourth class, words and syllables of four letters; fifth class, reading lessons of one syllable; sixth class, reading lessons of two syllables; seventh class, the Testament; eighth class, the Bible.[13]

This scheme of grading, as Monroe has stated, ". . . was superficial and quite different from a modern graded school system, since it covered but two or three years'

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[11] Monroe, op. cit., pp. 366-367.

[12] Knight, op. cit., p. 164.

[13] Monroe, op. cit., p. 367.

work."[14] But it did popularize the idea of grading.[15]

III. CONTINUED USE OF THE ALPHABET METHOD

The alphabet method was still used in teaching reading, although "varied methods" were used:

> The alphabet is taught by varied methods; by the printed lesson sheet, by single letters on binder's boards, and by tracing the letters in white sand, lightly covering a part of the writing desk painted black for the purpose. This is called the sand desk. This method, besides being a useful one in varying the exercises of the a-b-c-darians, is well calculated to aid mental development, calling into exercise analysis and comparison, and is a very intellectual method of teaching the alphabet [italics not in the original] . . . .[16]

IV. A SUMMARY OF THE MAIN POINTS OF THE CHAPTER

The monitorial or Lancastrian school demonstrated that group instruction was not only feasible, but practical. No longer was reading instruction conducted on an individual basis as it had been in the dame and district schools. Group instruction was now employed, and it proved to be very

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[14]Monroe, op. cit., pp. 366-367.

[15]Ibid.

[16]Ibid.

successful.

The monitorial school accustomed people to the idea of using graded materials. The reading program was minutely graded.

The alphabet method of teaching reading was still used, although "varied methods" of teaching the alphabet were employed.

CHAPTER IV

GROUP INSTRUCTION IN THE GRADED SCHOOL

Individual instruction in reading was employed in the dame school of the colonial period and in the district school, which reached its peak of popularity between 1830 and 1835. During the first half of the nineteenth century, the Lancastrian monitorial schools demonstrated the possibilities of group instruction on a large scale. The evolution of the graded school began about 1840 and was accomplished in all of the northern states by 1860.[1] The newly developed graded school relied heavily on group instruction. This chapter presents a brief statement concerning the development of the graded school,[2] a description of the methods of reading instruction used in the graded school, and comments about the first series of graded readers (McGuffey's Eclectic Readers).

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[1]Ellwood P. Cubberley, Public Education in the United States: A Study and Interpretation of American Educational History (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1934), pp. 300-314.

[2]For a further discussion of the development of the graded school, see Appendix A, pages 163-166.

I. THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE GRADED SCHOOL

The first half of the nineteenth century (1800's) saw the development of a graded school system similar to the graded system existing today. Before this time children of all ages and at all stages of educational development had been grouped together in one room under the instruction of one teacher. Individual instruction had been the common form of instruction before the development of the graded school; i.e., the children came up to the teacher one at a time and recited individually. It was group instruction, however, that became prominent in the graded school. The students were divided into grades and each grade was placed under the instruction of one teacher.

Reports concerning the German-Pestalozzian schools, "in which the children were 'divided according to age and attainment, and a single teacher had charge only of a single class,'" were very influential in bringing about the transition to the graded school system in this country.[3]

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[3]Nila Banton Smith, American Reading Instruction: Its Significance in Gaining a Perspective on Current Practices in Reading (New York: Silver, Burdett and Company, 1934), p. 83.

There were, however, many other factors involved in this transition, as evidenced by the following quotation from Cubberley:

> The transition of the graded system, it is seen, came naturally and easily. For half a century the course of instruction in the evolving common or English grammar schools had been in the process of expansion, due in part to the preparation of better and longer textbooks, but largely through the addition of new subjects of study. The school term had gradually been lengthened, the years of school provided had been increased in number, the school course had been differentiated into various divisions or schools, the master and his assistants had from the first divided up the work in each room on a rough age-and-grade classification basis, and the entire evolution, up to about 1840-1850, had prepared the way for a simple reorganization of the work which would divide the schools into seven, or eight, or nine grades, and give each teacher one grade to handle. . . .[4]

II. THE PROCRUSTEAN NATURE OF THE INSTRUCTION USED IN THE GRADED SCHOOLS

Underlying the group instruction of the graded school of the period before ability grouping was employed (i.e., from about 1850 to about 1925) was the assumption that children were alike in needs and capacities.[5] The

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[4] Cubberley, op. cit., pp. 312-313.

[5] Ibid., p. 513.

result of this assumption was that all of the children in a particular grade were expected to learn the same material in the same order and in the same way:

> . . . The work for each grade was quite definitely laid down; the kind, amount, and order of subject-matter to be learned, by all pupils in all parts of the city, and regardless of age, past experience, future prospects, or physical or mental condition, was uniformly prescribed for all. . . .[6]

Elsbree and McNally have referred to the graded school as "Procrustean in nature, attempting to fit the child to a preconceived pattern."[7]

III. THE INFLUENCE OF McGUFFEY'S ECLECTIC READERS

Some disagreement exists as to whether McGuffey's Eclectic Readers were the result of the new graded school system[8] or whether McGuffey's Readers were instrumental in establishing the graded school.[9] There can be little

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[6] Ibid., p. 514.

[7] Willard S. Elsbree and Harold J. McNally, Elementary School Administration and Supervision (second edition; New York: American Book Company, 1959), p. 127.

[8] Smith [op. cit., p. 83.] has stated that "graded series of readers were a natural development of the new graded school system."

[9] Cubberley [op. cit., p. 294.] has stated: "That this graded series of Readers helped to establish the grade school, with its class organization, there can be little question."

doubt, however, that McGuffey's books were a very important determining factor in the kind of reading instruction used in the early history of the graded school.

The first graded reading series. William Holmes McGuffey was "the first author to produce a clearly defined and carefully graded series consisting of one reader for each grade in the elementary school."[10] Following is a description of how McGuffey developed his series:

> Early in 1836 McGuffey, fully realizing the necessity of proper and uniform textbooks, came into contact with Truman and Smith, publishers in Cincinnati, who a year before had printed Ray's Arithmetic. Whether McGuffey took his assembled and graded readers to them or whether they sought him out as the proper person to prepare such books is unknown. The publishers' heirs later claimed that they solicited McGuffey and outlined the plan. At any rate, on April 28, 1836, he made a contract with the Cincinnati firm to prepare four readers, to be completed within eighteen months. It is significant that the first and second readers were then in manuscript. Dr. Benjamin Chidlaw, then a student, contracted to help McGuffey complete the third and fourth readers, receiving five dollars. McGuffey was to receive 10 per cent royalty until the sum reached $1,000, after which the books became the property of the publishers. These four comprised the original Eclectic Series.[11]

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[10]Smith, op. cit., pp. 105-106.

[11]Ellwood P. Cubberley, Readings in Public Education in the United States: A Collection of Sources and Readings to Illustrate the History of Educational Practice and Progress in the United States (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1934), pp. 274-276.

Before McGuffey was through, however, his books numbered not four, but seven (primer, first reader, second reader, third reader, fourth reader, fifth reader, and sixth reader). The seven books were first published between the years 1836 and 1844.[12] The books have gone through several editions since that time. Figure 8 on page 47 shows the seven McGuffey books printed from the original old plates of the 1879 edition.

Betts has caustically commented that the McGuffey books contributed to the regimentation of pupils:

> By means of his graded series of readers, McGuffey unwittingly contributed to the regimentation of pupils. His work gave an impetus to the grade placement of subject matter at a time when there was a great need for the study of systematic sequences. This idea of grade placement was erroneously interpreted by those who assumed homogeneity and common needs among the pupils of a given grade classification. Sequences were established, but they were not systematic for a given individual. . . .[13]

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[12] Smith, op. cit., p. 105.

[13] Emmett Albert Betts, Foundations of Reading Instruction (New York: American Book Company, 1957), p. 72.

FIGURE 8

1879 EDITION OF McGUFFEY'S
ECLECTIC READERS

Characteristics of the McGuffey Readers. McGuffey was the first "author who recognized the necessity of repetition for fixing new words."[14] Smith has stated:

> McGuffey was the first who definitely provided for repetition. He also made an innovation in decreasing the number of new words introduced per page. In his lessons in the first reader the new words range in number from ten to twelve per page; in the review lessons there are no new words at all.[15]

The first lesson in the primer introduces only four words: "a," "and," "cat," and "rat." The "sentences" to be read in the first lesson are two in number and are very simple:

A cat and a rat.
A rat and a cat.[16]

The beginning lessons in the first reader provide an opportunity for review. There are no new words in the first two lessons; "pen" is the only new word in the third lesson.[17]

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[14]Smith, op. cit., p. 107.

[15]Ibid.

[16]William Holmes McGuffey, McGuffey's Eclectic Primer (revised edition; New York: American Book Company, 1896), p. 7.

[17]William Holmes McGuffey, McGuffey's First Eclectic Reader (revised edition; New York: American Book Company, 1896), pp. 7-9.

Although McGuffey was aware of the value of repetition and review, his books increase in difficulty much more rapidly than modern readers (but not nearly as rapidly as Webster's "Old Blue-back"). Some of the material presented in the fifth and sixth readers is today studied in high school, and, in some cases, even in college. The fifth reader contains a portion of Shakespeare's "Hamlet."[18] The sixth reader includes eight selections by Shakespeare.[19] No wonder Quick stated that when he went to school ". . . the 1844 Fifth Reader, or McGuffey's Rhetorical Guide, had been found too difficult, not only for the pupils but for the teachers of the community."[20]

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[18]William Holmes McGuffey, McGuffey's Fifth Eclectic Reader (revised edition; New York: American Book Company, 1896), pp. 328-333.

[19]William Holmes McGuffey, McGuffey's Sixth Eclectic Reader (revised edition; New York: American Book Company, 1896).

[20]Herbert Quick, One Man's Life: An Autobiography (Indianapolis, Indiana: Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1925), p. 156, cited by Edgar W. Knight and Clifton L. Hall, Readings in American Educational History (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1951), p. 516.

McGuffey's books were very moralistic or didactic in nature. According to Minnich:

> . . . The lessons constituted a complete code of ethics, a manual of morals and manners. McGuffey envisaged the need of moral instruction in an era of bookless millions; he supplied this need in his Readers, whose influence has never been equalled by any school text.[21]

The didactic materials were designed to show either how a certain type of behavior was bad or how a certain type of behavior was good and desirable. It can be seen from the following titles what good human qualities were being impressed upon the minds of the young readers:

"Finding the Owner"
"Speak Gently"
"Deeds of Kindness"
"True Courage"
"Don't Kill the Birds"
"When To Say No"
"The Contented Boy"[22]

Lesson LIX from McGuffey's Third Eclectic Reader shows how McGuffey tried to convince the students of the wisdom of

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[21]Harvey C. Minnich (ed.), Old Favorites from the McGuffey Readers (New York: American Book Company, 1936), p. vii.

[22]William Holmes McGuffey, McGuffey's Third Eclectic Reader (revised edition; New York: American Book Company, 1896).

perseverance:

PERSEVERE

1. The fisher who draws in his net too soon,
   Won't have any fish to sell;
   The child who shuts up his book too soon,
   Won't learn any lessons well.

2. If you would have your learning stay,
   Be patient,--don't learn too fast:
   The man who travels a mile each day,
   May get round the world at last.[23]

The following are titles of selections designed to show the reader the pitfalls of wrong behavior:

"Beware of the First Drink"
"The Insolent Boy"[24]

Lesson LVII in McGuffey's Second Eclectic Reader points out the evil of being a glutton:

THE GREEDY GIRL

1. Laura English is a greedy little girl. Indeed, she is quite a glutton. Do you know what a glutton is? A glutton is one who eats too much, because the food tastes good.

2. Laura's mother is always willing she should have as much to eat as is good for her; but sometimes, when her mother is not watching, she eats so much that it makes her sick.

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[23] William Holmes McGuffey, McGuffey's Third Eclectic Reader (revised edition; New York: American Book Company, 1896).

[24] Ibid., p. 151.

3. I do not know why she is so silly. Her kitten never eats more than it needs. It leaves the nice bones on the plate, and lies down to sleep when it has eaten enough.

4. The bee is wiser than Laura. It flies all day among the flowers to gather honey, and might eat the whole time if it pleased. But it eats just enough, and carries all the rest to its hive.

5. The squirrel eats a few nuts or acorns, and frisks about as gayly as if he had dined at the king's table.

6. Did you ever see a squirrel with a nut in his paws? How bright and lively he looks as he eats it!

7. If he lived in a house made of acorns, he would never need a doctor. He would not eat an acorn too much.

8. I do not love little girls who eat too much. Do you, my little readers?

9. I do not think they have such rosy cheeks, or such bright eyes, or such sweet, happy tempers as those who eat less.[25]

The upper-grade readers are less didactic and more literary than the lower-grade readers. "While the elementary lessons of the McGuffey Readers," according to Minnich, "dealt largely with problems of conduct, the more advanced lessons served to introduce the older 'scholars' to the best of the

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[25]William Holmes McGuffey, McGuffey's Second Eclectic Reader (revised edition; New York: American Book Company, 1896), pp. 124-126.

forensic, descriptive, sacred, and poetic literature of the world."[26] It has been stated that "to millions, to probably nine out of ten average Americans, what taste of literature they got from McGuffey's was all they ever had; what literature the children brought into the home in McGuffey's readers was all that ever came. . . ."[27]

Selections by the following well-known people are in McGuffey's books:

John Greenleaf Whittier	John Russell
Oliver Goldsmith	Nathaniel Hawthorne
Louisa May Alcott	William Cullen Bryant
Washington Irving	Daniel Webster
Charles Dickens	H. D. Thoreau
Alfred Tennyson	H. W. Longfellow
William Shakespeare	Elizabeth B. Browning
Sir Francis Bacon	Sir Walter Scott
Edgar Allen Poe	Ralph Waldo Emerson

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[26] Minnich, op. cit., p. vii.

[27] Smith, op. cit., p. 83.

A "fence-straddler." It was stated in Chapter III that the alphabet approach was used in teaching reading in the monitorial school, as it had been in the dame school and in the district school. The child began by learning the letters of the alphabet. From there he went on to learn two-letter syllables; such as, "ab," "eb," and "ib." The student gradually worked his way up to words of six, eight, and more syllables. Beginning in about 1840, however, there was much interest being shown in the word method, whereby the child began his reading instruction by learning to read real words. McGuffey's books were, according to the suggestions given to teachers, designed to be used with the alphabet method, the word method, or a combination of both.[28]

The popularity of McGuffey's books. Webster's "Old Blue-back" had sold over 80,000,000 copies by 1880, but McGuffey's books sold even more. The estimated combined sales of McGuffey's books (including a spelling book he

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[28] William Holmes McGuffey, McGuffey's Eclectic Primer (revised edition; New York: American Book Company, 1896), p. iii.

published) totaled 122,000,000 between 1836 and 1920. "For the year 1889, for which exact figures are available, the sales were 2,172,413 copies," Cubberley has stated.[29] The popularity of McGuffey's books has been emphasized by Cameron:

> . . . These books head the list of American best sellers. Except the Bible and the dictionary no books have ever sold so many millions of copies. Year after year a million and a half McGuffey Readers were printed, and about 1880 they reached nearly two millions a year. There is no record like it. . . .[30]

IV. A SUMMARY OF THE MAIN POINTS OF THE CHAPTER

By 1860 the graded school had completed its evolution in the northern states. In the early days of the graded school it was believed that each child was like every other child, that all students had the same needs, and that all

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[29] Cubberley, op. cit., pp. 293-294.

[30] W. J. Cameron on the McGuffey Readers. A talk given in the Ford Sunday Evening Hour, March 17, 1935, over a nation-wide network of the Columbia Broadcasting System from Detroit, cited by Edgar W. Knight and Clifton L. Hall, Readings in American Educational History (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1951), pp. 533-534.

pupils could be taught the same material in the same way.

The outstanding books in the field of reading at the time were the seven books constituting McGuffey's Eclectic Readers, the first graded series of readers published in America. McGuffey's books were moralistic and literary in quality. McGuffey was the first author to provide for repetition of words for better learning. He also reduced the number of new words introduced on each page.

CHAPTER V

THE ADVENT AND DEVELOPMENT OF ABILITY GROUPING

The grade school of 1860 grouped students primarily according to chronological age.[1] This proved to be unsatisfactory because children of any chronological age vary widely in mental ability, experiences, background, and interests. Many administrative and educational devices have been employed by educators in an effort to bring all pupils up to grade level. Ability grouping was and is one of the devices used. This chapter tells of the factors which led to the development of ability grouping, presents a brief history of ability grouping in American schools, describes a basal reading series, enumerates both the advantages and disadvantages of ability grouping, and discusses the status of ability grouping.

I. FACTORS LEADING TO THE USE OF ABILITY GROUPING

Two movements paved the way for the use of ability grouping. One was the child-study movement; the other was

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[1] Jeannette Veatch, Individualizing Your Reading Program (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1959), pp. 4-5.

the testing movement.

The child-study movement. In the colonial days the child was regarded as a little bundle of sin. All life, including education, was purposely made harsh in order to purge the child of his sinfulness. As time went by and religion was emphasized less, the child still faired poorly. Educationally children were regarded as being all the same. All students were expected to master the same material in the same length of time with the same instruction--or lack of instruction.

Things began to change during the last two decades of the nineteenth century. This change came about primarily through the works of an English naturalist, Charles Darwin, and two psychologists, Preyer of Germany and G. Stanley Hall of America. Cubberley and Zeis have described the rise of the child-study movement as follows:

> Beginning with the naturalist Darwin, in England, who studied his boy's development with great precision and detail; the psychologist Preyer, in Germany, who published [1881] a two-volume work recording his observations on the first three years' development of his boy; and the American psychologist, G. Stanley Hall, who, returning as a student from Germany [1880], began a series of studies of all phases of

> child life--a widespread movement soon developed, especially in England and the United States, the aim of which was to make a careful study of the child's development, both mental and physical.[2]

Where once child development had been of little concern to adults, the opposite was the case during the late eighties and early nineties. At that time the child-study movement ". . . almost monopolized the educational field. Children were minutely observed from birth onward, and as they grew older were questioned and the results recorded, tabulated, and interpreted."[3]

The testing movement. The child-study movement, which began in the 1880's, provided definite evidence of individual differences among children. The testing movement, which began in the 1890's, provided scientific tools for measuring such differences. The works of Rice, Judd, Thorndike, Binet, and others led to the development of objective measurements of academic and mental ability.[4] As Smith has stated, "The appearance of tests which could be

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[2]Ellwood P. Cubberley and Walter Crosby Eells, An Introduction to the Study of Education (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1933), pp. 165-166.

[3]Ibid., p. 166.

[4]For a more complete discussion of the testing movement, see Appendix B, pages 165-172.

used in revealing individual weaknesses . . . directed attention to individual needs."[5]

II. THE TESTING MOVEMENT IN READING

According to Smith, "Reading was the last of the tool subjects to yield itself to the testing movement."[6] Although a few attempts were made to test vocabulary, it was not until 1915 that the first standardized reading test was published. Smith attributes this delay in making a standardized reading test to two factors. In the first place, the oral reading procedure was the one in general use in the early 1900's and such a procedure ". . . proved to be an unwieldy and uneconomical product to measure by means of standardized group tests."[7] In the second place, "the entire subject of reading was so complicated that it was difficult to analyze it into elements

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[5]Nila Banton Smith, American Reading Instruction: Its Development and Its Significance in Gaining a Perspective on Current Practices in Reading (New York: Silver, Burdett and Company, 1934), p. 182.

[6]Ibid., p. 186.

[7]Ibid.

which seemed sufficiently significant to warrant testing."[8] In 1915, however, Starch reported that he had devised a silent reading test, and he gave the following analysis of reading:

> The chief elements in reading are: (1) the comprehension of the matter read, (2) the speed of reading, and (3) the correctness of the pronunciation. The first two are the most important so far as reading strictly is concerned since we learn to read for our own individual use. For this reason such factors as intonation, expression, pauses, and the like are relatively insignificant. We use silent reading rather than oral reading in practical life.[9]

Once an analysis of reading had been made, a number of silent reading tests began to appear. By 1918 "The Brown Silent Reading Test," "The Kansas Silent Reading Test," "Courtis's Silent Reading Tests," and "Monroe's Standardized Silent Reading Test" had appeared.[10]

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[8] Ibid.

[9] Daniel Starch, Journal of Educational Psychology, (January, 1915), p. 2, cited by Nila Banton Smith, American Reading Instruction: Its Development and Its Significance in Gaining a Perspective on Current Practices in Reading (New York: Silver, Burdett and Company, 1934), p. 156.

[10] Nila Banton Smith, American Reading Instruction: Its Development and Its Significance in Gaining a Perspective on Current Practices in Reading (New York: Silver, Burdett and Company, 1934), p. 157.

III. THE DEVELOPMENT OF ABILITY GROUPING IN READING FROM 1920 TO THE PRESENT

It was between the years 1918 and 1925, after reading and intelligence tests had appeared, that ability grouping in reading was first advocated. Smith has cited the following recommendation from a St. Cloud, Minnesota, bulletin on reading which was published in the 1918-1925 period:

> During the early part of the first grade the Detroit First Grade Intelligence Tests are given to all children entering school for the purpose of grouping them according to ability into a fast-moving group, an average-rate group, and a slow-moving group. The classification made on the basis of these tests is only tentative. If a teacher, after careful consideration, believes that a pupil belongs in a different group from the one in which the test placed him, she should feel free to give him a trial elsewhere. In the fast-moving group, the pupils are naturally more resourceful and self-reliant and are capable of covering a large amount of reading work. The average-rate group can, under ordinary conditions, cover the required amount of reading work with a reasonable amount of study and effort. The slow-moving group should confine their energies to the minimum essentials. The seat-work given them and the books used should be simple enough to be within their ability so that they will not be faced by failure and discouragement.[11]

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[11] Ibid., p. 183.

According to Hester the first use of ability grouping was based on the belief that it would aid the teacher in providing for individual differences:

> The belief that grouping in reading instruction was necessary to provide for individual differences began to be accepted by educators in the 1920's. Teachers felt they could provide more adequate instruction if they divided the pupils into homogeneous groups. At first the basis for such grouping was the result of standardized intelligence tests. Since these tests required the child to read to answer the questions, the good readers became the "bright" group. Accordingly the other children fell into the "average" and "slow" groups. A social stigma was attached to membership in the "slow" group.
>
> The only provision for differentiation of instruction was that of speed. All of the children in a given grade were supposed to "cover" the same material, but at different rates. For example, the "fast" group might be reading on page 276 of the reader, the "average" group on page 183, and the "slow" group on page 42. . . .[12]

Research studies made in the late twenties and the early thirties made it apparent that intelligence was only one factor to be considered in grouping pupils. Other factors, including reading achievement, special interests,

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[12]Kathleen B. Hester, Teaching Every Child to Read (New York: Harper & Brothers, Publishers, 1955), p. 282.

and physical conditions had to be considered as well. It was also becoming evident that teaching methods needed to be varied. In many cases procedures that were successful with the fast group were not successful with the slow group. It was now felt that not all students need "cover" the same material during the school year. Students were to be allowed to progress at their own rates. Nevertheless, ". . . acceleration was still the keynote of grouping. . . ."[13]

By the 1940's flexibility of grouping had become important:

> . . . Groups became more flexible. Children might be shifted from one group to another if the one in which they were participating no longer met their needs. Many different types of small group organization sprang up. A few typical plans were those of grouping according to reading achievement, grouping through a unifying center of interest, grouping through specific group interests, and grouping through the use of many small groups guided by pupil helpers. The problem that was still uppermost in the teacher's mind, however, was how to bring the pupils up to a hypothetical "grade" level [italics not in the original].[14]

Writing in 1955 Hester pointed out that ". . . there has been a shift in emphasis from 'how to bring the child up to grade standards' to 'in what ways reading can help to

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[13] Ibid.

[14] Ibid.

develop the child.'"[15] She went on to point out that it is with this latter problem that the teacher of today is concerned.[16]

Flexibility of grouping, which came to be stressed in the 1940's, is today considered to be the key to the effective use of grouping. Dawson and Bamman have explained the importance of flexibility of grouping as follows:

> If children's needs and interests are to be properly considered, grouping for reading must be flexible. Typically classrooms are divided into three groups: the fast-advancing, the average, and the slower-learning; but the teacher must be ready at any time to move a child into another group as soon as he will fit better into the work of that group. Flexibility has another connotation; namely, that pupils will join different groups as they join in their various enterprises. At times, a group will be formed for those pupils who need help in learning some particular reading skill, such as mastering the blend "cl," its members possibly being drawn from all three of the regular reading groups; or each of two or three children may prepare to read orally a different story and ask their classmates to form as many groups as individual pupils select the story they prefer to hear; or some members of a class may work out a dramatization, while others do crayon illustrations to be assembled into a "movie"; or a few pupils may be taken aside for needed help in using an index. During the day,

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[15] Ibid.

[16] Ibid.

> any particular pupil may work in three or more different reading groups. Besides, there are many other groupings that develop as the children plan and carry out learning activities in the social studies and elementary science. Grouping is almost necessarily flexible.[17]

Other modern writers in the field of education have emphasized flexibility of grouping:

> Grouping practices should be extremely flexible. . . .[18]

> Within any class the grouping for instructional purposes should be highly flexible. . . .[19]

> Flexibility is a keynote of grouping. Flexibility of methods, materials, and pupil placement must be observed at all times. Whenever a pupil's reading behavior indicates clearly that he would make better progress in another group, he should be transferred to it.[20]

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[17]Mildred A. Dawson and Henry A. Bamman, Fundamentals of Basic Reading Instruction (New York: Longmans, Green and Company, Inc., 1959), p. 71.

[18]Arthur W. Heilman, Principles and Practices of Teaching Reading (Columbus, Ohio: Charles E. Merrill Books, Inc., 1961), p. 128.

[19]Leo J. Brueckner and Guy L. Bond, The Diagnosis and Treatment of Learning Difficulties (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1955), p. 24.

[20]David H. Russell, Children Learn To Read (Chicago: Ginn and Company, 1949), p. 333.

IV. THE BASIC OR BASAL READING SERIES

When a class is organized according to ability groups, the basic reader (also referred to as the basal reader) is the main instrument of instruction used. Betts has pointed out that "the traditional way to teach reading is through the use of a basal series of readers."[21] Heilman was in agreement when he said, "The use of a basic reading series is the foundation upon which most of the reading instruction in American schools is built."[22]

"Basic reader series," Heilman has stated, "start with book materials at the readiness level and provide graded materials for each grade level up to the seventh or eighth grade."[23] Supplementary materials to enrich instruction are also available when a basic reading series is used. The following pages contain a discussion of the materials that make up a basal reading series.

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[21]Emmett Albert Betts, Foundations of Reading Instruction (New York: American Book Company, 1957), p. 386.

[22]Heilman, op. cit., p. 100.

[23]Ibid.

Readiness books. Figure 9 on page 69 is a picture of the two reading readiness books (and the teachers' manual) from the Ginn series.[24] A readiness book is very similar to a workbook in design and construction. Heilman has given the following description of readiness books:

> At the readiness level one might find picture books in which a picture or series of pictures suggests a child-centered story. From the pictures the teacher and the pupils develop a story. . . . Other readiness books may call for children to identify and mark similar objects, letters, or words, to facilitate the development of visual perception. To strengthen auditory discrimination the pupil will identify two pictures in a group which will rhyme when named. Identifying other pairs of pictures which start with the same sound gives practice in the discrimination of initial sounds.[25]

Pre-primers. "The readiness books," Heilman has stated, "are followed by a series of pre-primers, two or three in number, in which the characters are the same ones the children met and talked about in the readiness books."[26] He has further elaborated:

> . . . The pre-primers introduce pupils to printed words along with pictures [italics in

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[24] David H. Russell, et. al., The Ginn Basic Readers (New York: Ginn and Company, 1957).

[25] Heilman, op. cit., p. 101.

[26] Ibid.

FIGURE 9

TWO READING READINESS BOOKS
AND THE TEACHERS' MANUAL
FROM THE GINN SERIES

> in the original]. The first few pages may have single words which are "naming words" to go with the picture. Gradually more words and sentences per page are used.[27]

Figure 10 on page 71 is a picture of the three pre-primers from the Ginn series.[28] The books have paper backs rather than hard backs. Each page contains a large, attractive colored picture. The print is large and there are few words on each page so the material will be easy for the young student to read. The pre-primers become progressively more difficult. My Little Red Story Book is the easiest of the three; My Little Blue Story Book is the most difficult of the three.

It is interesting to note that pre-primers did not come into existence until after 1925. Pre-primers were developed so the authors of primers would be able to write "interesting and well-written primer stories":

> . . . Authors of primers are ever distraught between their desire to provide interesting and well-written primer stories, which necessarily require a large number of new words, and the

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[27] Ibid.

[28] David H. Russell, et. al., The Ginn Basic Readers (New York: Ginn and Company, 1957).

FIGURE 10

THE THREE PRE-PRIMERS FROM
THE GINN SERIES

> limited recognition-ability of the children who are learning to read. The pre-primer has come into existence as a means of solving this problem. . . .[29]

Books and workbooks. The first hard-back book that a child uses in reading is the primer, which follows the pre-primers and which:

> . . . carefully builds on what has gone before, using the same characters the children are familiar with and reviewing the words already met, while it introduces 90 to 150 new words.[30]

After the first grade, two hard-back reading books are provided for each school year. The publishing company has designed one book for the first semester and the other book for the second semester. Usually each reading textbook has a complementary workbook, the material in which is used most commonly as seat work for the child. Figure 11 on page 73 is a picture of the primer (the first hard-back book the child encounters) and the accompanying workbook from the Ginn series.[31]

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[29] Smith, op. cit., p. 201.

[30] Heilman, op. cit., p. 101.

[31] David H. Russell, et. al., The Ginn Basic Readers (New York: Ginn and Company, 1957).

FIGURE 11

THE PRIMER AND ACCOMPANYING WORKBOOK
FROM THE GINN SERIES

The workbook owes its origin to the period when silent reading was emphasized (approximately between 1918 and 1925). Teachers of this period found it necessary ". . . to think of exercises which would furnish a check of the children's comprehension in silent reading. . . ."[32] Consequently:

> . . . publishers began to issue quantities of seat work materials consisting of silent reading exercises in which the children were to make some response in the way of drawing, construction work, true-false statements, completion sentences, and so on. . . .[33]

It was from material of this sort that the present-day workbook eventually developed.

Teachers' manuals. The two types of manuals for teachers of reading that are on the market today are shown in Figure 12 on page 75. On the left is the type wherein the instructions for teaching and the material to be taught are bound together in one hard-back book. On the right is the paper-back manual which contains only the directions to the teacher; it does not contain the pupil's reading material. The two manuals in Figure 12 were published by Ginn and Company of New York. Not all publishers of reading textbooks

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[32] Smith, op. cit., p. 158.

[33] Ibid.

FIGURE 12

TWO TYPES OF MANUALS FOR
TEACHERS OF READING

publish both types of manuals. Some publish only one or the other.

Heilman has made the following favorable comment about teachers' manuals:

> One of the greatest advantages in using a good series is the availability of excellent teacher guides. These guides are carefully worked out by the authors with the total reading program in mind. Sound laws of learning are followed, specific techniques are suggested, lesson plans are given in great detail, and the reasons for using certain approaches are explained. . . .[34]

Silent reading, which was instrumental in bringing about the development of workbooks, was also responsible for bringing teachers' manuals into general use. "The technique of teaching silent reading," Smith has stated, "was so novel that authors evidently felt it incumbent upon them to furnish rather definitely prescribed instruction."[35] Although most of the manuals ranged in length from 50 to 150 pages, the manual by Bolenius was 511 pages long:

> Emma M. Bolenius was a pioneer in setting a new standard for separate and detailed teachers' manuals for each grade. Miss Bolenius's first grade manual for The Boys' and Girls' Readers (Houghton Mifflin Company [1923]) had all the appearance of a

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[34]Heilman, op. cit., p. 103.

[35]Smith, op. cit., pp. 164-165.

> professional book. It had a neat gray cloth binding decorated with an attractive design and contained 511 pages. In addition to giving instructions for procedure by lessons, it provided many helps to teachers in the way of discussion of scientific investigations, suggestions for optional and supplemental work, directions for home-made equipment, bibliographies, etc. Such a wealth of material in a teachers' manual was unprecedented at this time.[36]

Supplementary materials. Heilman has pointed out that "it is becoming more common at all grade levels for basic reader series to include some supplementary books to be used in conjunction with the regular graded series. . . ."[37] Such books serve to provide the student with more experience with the words and word-attack skills that have been introduced to him at one level of difficulty before he goes on to the book at the next level of difficulty with its supply of additional new words and word-attack skills. For example, a student on the second grade level who has finished reading Scott, Foresman and Company's The New Friends and Neighbors will commonly read the first half of What Next? before going on to the basic reader for the second semester of

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[36] Ibid., pp. 165-166.

[37] Heilman, op. cit., p. 102.

second grade, The New More Friends and Neighbors.[38]

Supplementary materials other than supplementary readers are usually available from the publishers of basal readers. The following supplementary materials are available from Scott, Foresman and Company to enrich the reading program:

Supplementary readers
Reading tests
Dictionaries
The New Unit Card Set
The New Big Book
Pocket chart
Dick and Jane cutouts
Filmstrips
Records

Principles of basic series. According to Russell, the modern basic reading series is, in general, constructed on four main principles:

> 1. It provides continuity of growth [italics in the original] in reading skills, habits, and attitudes by means of a carefully graded series of reading materials. The basic series starts with the simplest reading materials and very gradually introduces new words, longer lines, broken lines, . . . complex sentences, longer

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[38] William S. Gray, et. al., The New Basic Readers: Curriculum Foundation Series (Chicago: Scott, Foresman and Company, 1956).

paragraphs, unfamiliar concepts, and a different style of writing. So gradually do the materials increase in difficulty that most pupils can advance through the materials with only a little guidance from the teacher.

2. It provides for a wide variety of reading activities [italics in the original]. . . . For example, since most children have to read to get a general impression, to follow a sequence of events or ideas, to follow directions, to skim for one or two specific facts, to find answers to specific questions, and to give pleasure to others, basal readers contain materials and suggestions for these activities. . . .

3. It provides a complete organization of reading experiences [italics in the original]. . . . A good basic series avoids gaps in learning experience and provides in an organized way for the different reading abilities children acquire. . . .

4. It provides for a worth-while content of ideas [italics in the original]. . . . Basic readers contain materials selected for their intrinsic value. Stories about family living, the community, boys and girls of other parts of America and other lands, food, shelter, and communication and transportation will be included. More factual material in these area in science and in biography are usually included. Many selections illustrate high ideals and strong character. In other words, the basic series includes a content of ideas important for children individually and collectively, in the modern world.[39]

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[39] Russell, op. cit., pp. 105-106.

V. ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF ABILITY GROUPING

Dawson and Bamman have pointed out the following advantages to be gained from the use of ability grouping:

1. Though . . . individual attention will always be essential, reading in groups gives pupils social experiences and, moreover, they learn from one another as they read together.

2. While there are individual differences among the pupils in each group, grouping reduces the <u>range</u> [italics in the original] of differences represented in the class as a whole.[40]

Gray would add the following as advantages of ability grouping:

3. It promotes the development of attitudes and skills which are common to the various reading activities in which children do and should engage in and out of school.

4. It promotes a common background on which teachers can build in promoting added growth in and through reading in all school activities.

5. It utilizes to distinct advantage group dynamics in stimulating interests and motives for reading among pupils who have not yet discovered that reading is a rewarding activity.

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[40] Dawson and Bamman, <u>op. cit.</u>, pp. 57-58.

6. It promotes breadth and depth of interpretation through discussions in which pupils compare their responses to stimulating problems and pool judgments in reaching sound conclusions.[41]

On the debit side it may be stated that:

1. No group has yet been found in which the individuals composing it possess equal amounts of any one ability. It is possible, for example, for a student to be of above-average ability in use of structural analysis, but below average in use of context clues.

2. Performances vary so greatly as to indicate that no single requirement is adequate as a stimulus to a majority of the group.

3. It is absurd to set up as a standard a definite quantity or quality of performance and expect each member of the group to accomplish just that amount and no other.

4. The social desirability of ability grouping has been questioned. Such grouping has been criticized on the grounds of being undemocratic and of developing feelings of inferiority or superiority.[42]

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[41]William S. Gray, "The Role of Group and Individualized Teaching in a Sound Reading Program," The Reading Teacher, XI (December, 1957), pp. 99-104.

[42]Leo J. Brueckner and Guy L. Bond, The Diagnosis and Treatment of Learning Difficulties (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1955), p. 24.

VI. TWO TYPES OF ABILITY GROUPING

The ability grouping described in the St. Cloud bulletin cited on page 62 was homogeneous grouping within a heterogeneous group. According to this plan, the students within any one classroom may vary considerably in scholastic ability. These students are divided into reading groups according to reading ability. A classroom of this type usually has three reading groups representing three levels of ability: a group of below-average readers, a group of average readers, and a group of above-average readers.

A second type of ability grouping is known as homogeneous grouping. Under this plan the students are divided into classrooms on the basis of ability (usually I.Q. or reading ability). Consequently all of the students in a given classroom are, at least in theory, of approximately equal reading ability. When this plan is used, there are often three classrooms at each grade level in each school: one composed of below-average readers, one composed of average readers, and one composed of above-average readers. Elsbree and McNally have described a plan of homogeneous

grouping which was used in Detroit and which was known as the Detroit "X-Y-Z" Plan:

> . . . In this plan, pupils were divided according to some criteria of achievement and learning ability into three groups labeled X, Y, and Z, comprising fast, average, and slow pupils respectively. According to the plan, the curriculum in these groups, and to some extent the materials of instruction, were differentiated; the slow groups got a program of "minimum essentials," while the superior pupils had a greatly enriched learning program. Modifications of this plan used more or less than three groups. . . .[43]

VII. STATUS OF ABILITY GROUPING

In February, 1949, the National Education Association reported on "Trends in City School Organization, 1938 to 1948." Part of the report dealt with the status of ability grouping, the facts about which:

> . . . . were obtained from a questionnaire distributed in November 1947 to all superintendents of schools in cities over 2,500 in population. Replies were received from 1,598 schools or approximately half of the city systems to which the inquiry was sent. . . .[44]

Unfortunately the report did not state whether the question-

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[43] Willard S. Elsbree and Harold J. McNally, Elementary School Administration and Supervision (second edition; American Book Company, 1959), p. 132.

[44] National Education Association, Trends in City School Organization, 1938 to 1948, Research Bulletin, XXVII (February, 1949), p. 5.

naire had made a distinction between the two types of ability grouping discussed on pages 82 and 83. Failure to make such a distinction could alter the results considerably. Two additional limitations of the report are: (1) the data are over ten years old and (2) no report of this type, no matter how recent, can ever hope to present a truly representative picture of the entire United States. With these limitations in mind, the reader is referred to Table I on page 85, which shows the per cent of cities using ability grouping in one or more schools. The data are grouped according to the sizes of the cities.

Additional information, which cannot be derived from Table I, was given in the report:

> Ability grouping is practiced in one or more schools in 53 per cent of the cities reporting. Among those using the plan, 24 per cent report that it is "on the way IN"; 22 per cent, that it is "on the way OUT."
>
> . . . In about half the cities in which it is in use, no particular trend in either direction has become apparent. The trend is slightly toward ability grouping in the cities below 30,000 in population and away from it in larger cities.[45]

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[45] Ibid., p. 17.

TABLE I

THE PER CENT OF CITIES OF 2,400 AND OVER POPULATION USING ABILITY GROUPING IN ONE OR MORE SCHOOLS AS REPORTED DURING THE 1947-48 SCHOOL YEAR*

Population of City	Per cent of Cities Using Ability Grouping in One or More Schools
Over 100,000	72
30,000 - 99,000	61
10,000 - 29,999	61
5,000 - 9,999	52
2,500 - 4,999	44

*The information for this table was taken from National Education Association, Trends in City School Organization, 1938-1948, Research Bulletin, XXVII (February, 1949), p. 17.

VIII. A SUMMARY OF THE MAIN POINTS OF THE CHAPTER

The child-study movement, which began in the 1880's, led to the realization that differences among children do exist. The testing movement, which began in the 1890's, provided instruments by means of which to measure objectively these differences.

The complicated nature of reading made it difficult to analyze this subject. Consequently reading was the last of the tool subjects to yield itself to the testing movement. The first reading test was completed in 1915.

Shortly after the development of reading tests, ability grouping in reading came to be the recommended practice. At first the basis for such grouping was the result of standardized intelligence tests. Later, however, it was realized that intelligence was only one factor to be considered in grouping pupils. Today flexibility is the keynote of grouping.

When ability grouping is employed, basal readers are almost universally used for reading instruction. When a basal series is used, supplementary materials; such as, dictionaries, film strips, records, cutout, flash cards, and supplementary readers, may be purchased in order to

enrich the reading program.

Ability grouping, like anything else, has both advantages and disadvantages. Therefore, both the debit and credit sides of ability grouping were discussed in the chapter.

There are two kinds of ability grouping: homogeneous grouping and homogeneous grouping within a heterogeneous group. The differences between the two were pointed out.

A report showing the status of ability grouping in the 1947-48 school year was presented.

CHAPTER VI

THE INDIVIDUALIZED READING PROGRAM

According to Fay, "The most widely discussed trend in the teaching of reading at the present time is individualized reading."[1] This chapter presents a definition of and a brief history of individualized reading, a discussion of the philosophy and characteristics of an individualized reading program, an enumeration of the advantages and disadvantages of such a program, the findings of research with regard to its effectiveness, modified approaches to the program, and a statement concerning the present status of individualized reading.

I. WHAT IS INDIVIDUALIZED READING?

Maib has stated:

> Individualized reading is just what the name implies. It is a method which enables the student to have a program adapted to his personal needs, with materials fitted to his reading ability, and the entire reading time devoted to his individual reading problems and interests.[2]

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[1] Leo Fay, "Trends in the Teaching of Elementary Reading," Phi Delta Kappan, XLI (May, 1960), 345.

[2] Frances Maib, "Individualizing Reading," Elementary English, XXIX (February, 1952), 65.

Robinson thinks of individualized reading as a form of organizing the classroom:

> . . . Basically, then, individualized reading appears to be a way of organizing the classroom so that every child is reading what appeals to him at all times. He may use basal readers, but he does not necessarily do so. He may use all or parts of supplementary readers, or he may read entirely from tradebooks (stories written especially for children). Whatever he reads is of high interest and presumably within his level of understanding.[3]

II. A BRIEF HISTORY OF INDIVIDUALIZED READING

It is difficult, if not impossible, to identify any one date as the genesis of this or that method of instruction. Often a method of instruction starts quietly and inconspicuously, sometimes taking years to come into prominence. Such has been the case with individualized reading.

Although it is not possible to name the date when individualized reading came into existence, it can be seen that individualized reading was regarded as one of the

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[3]Helen M. Robinson, "News and Comment: Individualized Reading," The Elementary School Journal, LX (May, 1960), 411.

"newer" practices in 1938. In that year the National Education Association published the Seventeenth Yearbook of the Department of Elementary School Principals. It was entitled "Newer Practices in Reading in the Elementary School." In that publication Dean described a plan of individualized instruction that had been used in teaching reading in the intermediate grades in Sacramento, California. "The first step in individualising the teaching of reading," said Dean, "is to determine each pupil's reading ability in terms of a school grade level."[4] This was done in the Sacramento schools by means of a standardized reading test. The second step was ". . . to have each pupil read many books suited to his reading ability."[5] "Simple check-ups" were made by asking a few simple, oral questions of a general nature on the book just completed. Dean has given the following descrip-

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[4]Ray B. Dean, "A Plan for Individual Reading in the Intermediate Grades," Newer Practices in Reading in the Elementary School, Seventeenth Yearbook of the Department of Elementary School Principals, XVII (July, 1938), 557.

[5]Ibid.

tion of a reading period according to the individualized reading program in Sacramento:

> During a part of the reading period, the reading teacher calls the children to her desk, one at a time, to read orally to her. She gives each child instruction in oral reading according to his needs while the other members of the class continue with their silent reading. If a pupil needs special remedial help, she may give it to him at this time. If several children need the same type of remedial help, she may call them all to her desk and work with them as a group.[6]

This description closely resembles that of a reading period under a modern individualized reading program.

Although individualized reading was recognized as a "newer" practice as early as 1938, it did not gain national recognition until 1952.[7] Veatch has stated that "several significant pieces" were published in education magazines in 1952-53 and that these gave ". . . a major push to the concept of individualized reading."[8] Since its national recognition in 1952, individualized reading

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[6] Ibid., p. 562.

[7] Jeannette Veatch, Individualising Your Reading Program (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1959), pp. xi-xii.

[8] Ibid., p. 89.

has grown to the point where it is "the most widely discussed trend in the teaching of reading at the present time. . . ."[9]

III. PHILOSOPHY OF INDIVIDUALIZED READING

The individualized reading program is based upon the knowledge that no two children are exactly alike and the belief that "seldom are two children ready to be taught from the same material at the same time."[10]

IV. CHARACTERISTICS OF AN INDIVIDUALIZED READING PROGRAM

Although variations in practice are found in the individualized reading programs throughout the country, there are "certain prime characteristics" which occur in all of these programs. The "prime characteristics," according to Veatch, are:

1. Self-selection of material by pupils for their own instruction.
2. Individual conferences between each pupil and teacher.

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[9]Fay, loc. cit.

[10]Veatch, op. cit., pp. 6-7.

3. Groups organized for <u>other</u> than reasons of ability or proficiency in reading.[11]

Lazar would add "pacing" as another characteristic.[12]

<u>Self-selection</u>. "Self-selection" means that the child has the responsibility for choosing what he is to read.[13] It must be admitted, however, that "varying degrees of self-selection are appropriate at different times for different children."[14] In other words, some children will have almost complete freedom in selecting what they will read, while others will need a great deal of guidance from the teacher.

In order to have self-selection, the students must have available books that are on many levels of ability and that deal with many areas of interest. (See pages 100-110 for a discussion of the ways in which a teacher can provide books for the individualized reading program.)

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[11] <u>Ibid</u>., p. ix.

[12] May Lazar, "Individualized Reading: A Dynamic Approach," <u>The Reading Teacher</u>, XI (December, 1957), 95.

[13] Helen Fisher Darrow and Virgil M. Howes, <u>Approaches to Individualized Reading</u> (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1960), p. 44.

[14] <u>Ibid</u>., p. 46.

At first glance individualized reading may sound like recreational reading, for recreational reading also involves self-selection of books. Veatch has pointed out that the difference lies in the instructional role of the teacher. The following are representative of recreational reading:

> A weekly or biweekly period
> Little or no actual instruction
> Teacher largely free and inactive once books are chosen
> Little attention to skill development
> Reading entirely silent[15]

Individualized reading, on the other hand, is characterized by the following:

> A daily reading period
> Continual instruction
> Teacher active and in demand
> Concern for skill development
> Reading silent with frequent opportunities to read orally to the teacher and to the class[16]

Individual conferences. As the name implies, individualized reading is built on a one-to-one relationship between pupil and teacher. The individual conference is basic to this. Darrow and Howes have stated that the conference ". . . is perhaps the heart of the individualized

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[15]Veatch, op. cit., p. x.

[16]Ibid.

approach to reading."[17] It is during the conference with the individual student that the teacher ". . . probes, questions, and listens to evaluate pupil progress, to diagnose strengths and weaknesses, and to discover pupil attitudes and interests in reading."[18]

". . . Most teachers agree," according to Veatch, "that conferences should be held on a voluntary basis."[19] This means that a child will have a conference when he feels the need for one. He will not be called for a conference with the teacher because his name begins with a certain letter of the alphabet or because he sits in a certain row or at a certain table.[20]

Darrow & Howes have pointed out the need for flexibility in timing the conference:

> Conference time is flexible. It may last from one to ten minutes. Some children require a conference every day, while two to four conferences a week are sufficient for others. Short conferences of one or two minutes every

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[17] Darrow and Howes, op. cit., p. 46.

[18] Ibid., p. 47.

[19] Veatch, op. cit., pp. 50-51.

[20] Ibid., p. 51.

> day help some children who are having difficulty or who need close teacher direction. More frequent conferences provide the security and encouragement needed in early stages of reading. Younger children frequently need closer daily guidance. For older children longer conferences once or twice a week are sometimes more satisfying and profitable.[21]

As pointed out above, the individual conference is a time for "probing." During this "probing" you will learn:

1. The pupil's understanding of and reaction to his chosen piece of material (a check on his silent reading).
2. The pupil's ability to read orally (the climactic point in the session).
3. The pupil's ability to deal with the mechanics of reading.[22]

It is during the individual conference that the teacher determines what reading skills the child is ready to learn and what reading skills the child needs to review. She may give the student help on this as an individual, or the teacher may place the child in a group with other children who need similar instruction.

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[21] Darrow and Howes, op. cit., p. 48.

[22] Veatch, op. cit., pp. 51-52.

Grouping. Grouping in an individualized reading program is highly flexible. Students are not grouped according to ability. They are grouped according to common interests or common needs.[23] Groups may be organized for any one of a number of reasons, including the following:

1. The teacher, after a periodic review of her notes, recognizes common needs and plans a group activity.

2. The teacher, after four or five individual reading conferences asks for volunteers or designates certain children to form a group to work on an immediate difficulty.

3. A careful analysis of test results or some other evaluation reveals possible group work.

4. Children's requests for help suggests forming a group.[24]

Since groups vary from day to day, there is no stigma attached to working in any particular group. A student might participate in several groups at specific times, or perhaps in none, depending upon his particular needs.[25]

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[23] Ibid., p. 24.

[24] Darrow and Howes, Op. cit., pp. 56-57.

[25] Ibid.

Pacing. "Pacing" may be defined as "the timing of new materials to be presented and learning experiences to be achieved. . . ."[26] Darrow and Howes have pointed out that pacing ". . . is an individual matter, different for each child."[27] They have illustrated the importance of proper pacing:

> . . . Mistakes in pacing can easily result in a loss of interest on the learner's part. To hold the pace down when the individual is ready to proceed means wasted time. What might have been a challenge becomes a bore because of snail-like steps. . . . On the other hand, to speed up the pace beyond the individual's readiness to grasp learning means frustration in learning. Material to be learned becomes incomprehensible when too much is expected too fast. . . .
>
> Pacing well-handled and well-planned can result in increased interest and energy for learning. Starting at the beginning, moving at a speed at which the new material can be absorbed, and taking the time needed to clinch the learning, all build feelings of readiness to tackle increasingly difficult steps.[28]

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[26] Ibid., p. 4.

[27] Ibid., pp. 4-5.

[28] Ibid., p. 4.

V. RECORD KEEPING, AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE INDIVIDUALIZED READING PROGRAM

The individualized reading program requires much record keeping. The teacher needs a ledger, a loose-leaf notebook, or a file of cards. There must be one page or card devoted to each child. The information to be included in each child's record consists of name, age, reading achievement, test scores, and other pertinent information.[29] Veatch has described how the teacher keeps records under the individualized reading program:

> As each child comes to you, you will keep a record of his individual conference with the date. You may write as the conference proceeds, or you can wait until its end if you wish. You should record what you consider important to remember: individual or group assignments, books or pages read, difficulties revealed ("Trouble with reading quotations" "Skips around too much") or an unusually emphatic reaction ("I just love horse stories!"). A note to yourself ("Needs help with word sounds" or "Must help him find more challenging material") may help you plan for the next day.
>
> You should also keep records, in a separate part of your notebook or file box, of independent activities and sharing time activities--dramatizations, choral speaking, panels, exhibits, etc.[30]

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[29] Veatch, op. cit., p. 55.

[30] Ibid., p. 56.

The student also will need to keep records. This is one of the criticisms leveled against individualized reading. (See page 112.) Veatch has described the student's record-keeping activities:

> Children themselves can keep track of each book or part of a book read. They can keep a diary, or a record of their reading in a file or notebook, listing simple and previously agreed upon items: title and author of book, date taken and returned, a brief comment. More detailed records are sometimes kept by children when there is some particular need or interest, but children should never be coerced into doing so--they should never be made to feel that they are being punished for finishing a book.[31]

It can be seen from the last sentence of the above statement that even one who advocates individualized reading can see the possible dangers of excessive record keeping.

VI. SUPPLYING BOOKS FOR THE INDIVIDUALIZED READING PROGRAM

In the middle of the nineteenth century, Horace Mann criticized the district school for its "diversity of books" because it prevented grouping those students who would have profited from being grouped together for instruction.[32]

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[31] Ibid.

[32] See page 28.

The situation is quite different today, however. Individualized reading, with its "diversity of books," ". . . does not eliminate all group procedures. . . ."[33] In the first place, the students are not grouped according to the book they are reading, but according to such things as common needs and interests. In the second place, the books used in the individualized reading program are books designed for children, which is more than one can say for the books used in the district school. Trade books, which are commonly used when the individualized approach is employed in reading instruction, are ". . . stories written especially for children."[34] The books are bright and colorful and contain numerous pictures. Figure 13 on page 102 shows several trade books which are on the market today. Such books cover a wide area of interests and a wide range of reading levels.

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[33]Jill Bonney and Levin B. Hanigan, "Individualized Teaching of Reading," National Elementary Principal, Thirty-Fourth Yearbook, (September, 1955), 76.

[34]Helen M. Robinson, "News and Comment: Individualized Reading," The Elementary School Journal, LX (May, 1960), 411.

FIGURE 13

SEVERAL TRADE BOOKS

Number and types of books needed. Books for the individualized reading program cannot be selected at random. The book supply in the classroom must meet the following standards:

> . . . The supply . . . must include books or similar materials to the extent of two to three titles per child, encompassing a variety of interests from airplanes to zebras, and offer a minimum span of seven grades (except five in first and second grade) of reading difficulty. . . .[35]

It has been pointed out that individualized reading does not exclude the use of basal readers, but only the use of them in the basal way:

> . . . Individualized reading does not exclude the books used in basal reading programs. The self-selection principle discards the well-known idea of planned, sequential development of level of difficulty programs of basal readers. Everyone knows there are some fine books printed in many basal series. The individualized plan welcomes all helpful and good books. It only questions the USE of basal books in a basal way.[36]

Children also enjoy reading periodicals; such as, Highlights for Children, Jack and Jill, Humpty Dumpty, and Children's Digest. Other materials that may be used in the

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[35] Jeannette Veatch, "Children's Interests and Individual Reading," The Reading Teacher, X (February, 1957), 161.

[36] Ibid.

individualized reading program include pamphlets, brochures, teacher-made and pupil-made materials, and newspapers.[37]

Sources of materials. Individualized reading is not based upon a haphazard system whereby the students simply bring to school "any old book" they want to read. Although the teacher does allow the students to use books which they have brought from home, she needs to inspect the books first to see whether they are desirable and will fit into the program. Most of the books will, of course, come from the school library; and some will probably come from the city or community library.

What does the teacher do if the book supplies in the school and community libraries prove to be inadequate? Those who advocate the individualized approach have recommended the following procedures to obtain additional books:

1. Order trade books on your regular book order.
2. Order one or two copies of supplementary readers that you do not already have.
3. Order one or two copies of basal readers you do not already have.

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[37]Darrow and Howes, op. cit., p. 31.

4. Sound out your P.T.A. or teachers' organization about having a Book Fair.

5. Visit all libraries within a reasonable distance and inquire how to obtain boxes of books on loan and about their policy of selling "throw-outs."

6. Request bookmobile visits and be persistent until they are made.

7. Write or visit state and county libraries or other tax-supported book depots and request the loan of boxes of books.

8. Hunt through second-hand book stores or stores of service organizations, and attend sales at church bazaars and the like.

9. Ask for book samples which principals, supervisors, or administrators frequently receive.[38]

Determining the level of difficulty. Although it is somewhat misleading to assign any one number to a book as being representative of the level of difficulty of that book, the teacher does need some aid in helping her to determine approximately how difficult a book is to read. There are two ways in which the teacher can determine the level of difficulty of a book. One method is relatively easy; the other, rather laborious.

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[38]Helen Fisher Darrow and Virgil M. Howes, Approaches to Individualized Reading (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1960), p. 39; and Jeannette Veatch, Individualizing Your Reading Program (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1959), p. 42.

A reading-difficulty formula provides a means of determining the reading difficulty of a book, but it is a laborious way of finding this information. Some of the formulas that may be used include:

> R. F. Flesch, How to Test Readability (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1951).
>
> Irving Lorge, "Predicting Reading Difficulty of Selections for Children," Elementary English Review, XVI (October, 1939), 229-233; and "Predicting Readability," Teachers College Record, XL (March, 1944), 404-419.
>
> Edgar Dale and Jeanne S. Chall, A Formula for Predicting Readability (Columbus: Bureau of Educational Research, Ohio State University).
>
> George Spache, "A New Readability Formula for Primary Reading Materials." Available from George Spache, Reading Laboratory and Clinic, University College, University of Florida, Gainesville, Florida.[39]

In the upper right-hand corner of Figure 14 on page 108 is a copy of the "Graded Reading Difficulty Work Sheet," which was designed by E. W. Dolch and which is published by The Garrard Press, Publishers, Champaign, Illinois. This work sheet gives a "graded reading difficulty" for three

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[39]William Kottmeyer, Teacher's Guide for Remedial Reading (St. Louis: Webster Publishing Company, 1959), pp. 202-203.

things: hard words, middle sentence length, and "long sentence." Appendix C on pages 173-175 contains a Dolch work sheet that has been worked out for the book, The Little Lion by Dave Quail.

The other materials shown in Figure 14 and Figure 15 on page 108 are examples of aids which help the teacher in determining the level of reading difficulty of books. The pamphlet in the upper left-hand corner of Figure 14 is:

> William R. Carriker, Selected Books for Retarded Readers (Lincoln, Nebraska: State of Nebraska, Department of Education, 1957).

This pamphlet gives the reading level and the interest level for each book listed.

The book in the lower right-hand corner of Figure 14 is:

> Albert J. Harris, How To Increase Reading Ability (third edition; New York: Longmans, Green and Company, 1956).

Pages 592-619 list books that have "outstanding interest appeal for poor readers." The books are divided according to level of reading difficulty.

The red-and-white book in the lower left-hand corner of Figure 14 is:

> William Kottmeyer, Teacher's Guide for Remedial Reading (St. Louis: Webster Publishing Company, 1959).

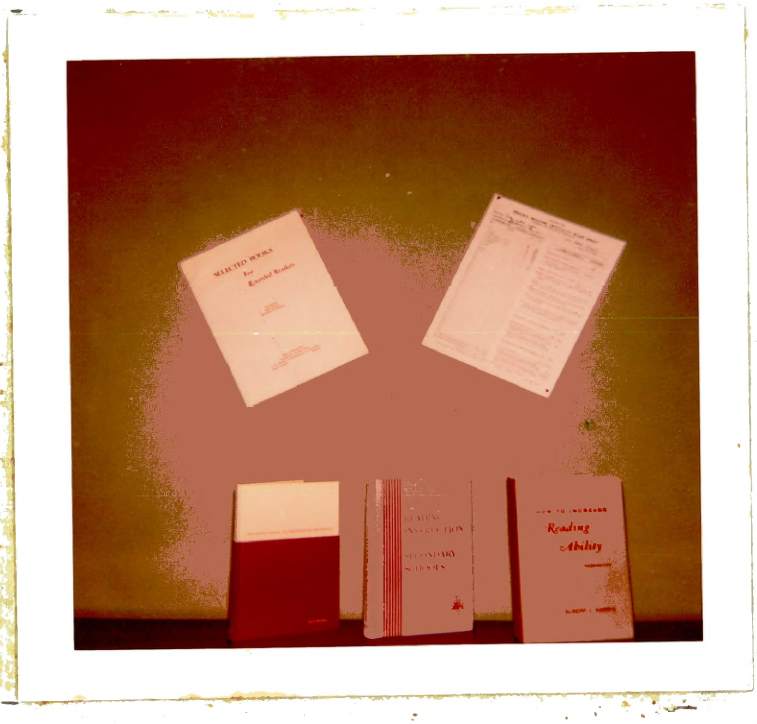

FIGURE 14

AIDS TO FINDING READING LEVEL AND INTEREST LEVEL OF BOOKS

FIGURE 15

AIDS TO FINDING READING LEVEL AND INTEREST LEVEL OF BOOKS

Pages 189-201 list books according to level of reading difficulty. Interest levels for each book are also given. However, the interest levels appear to be too broad to be of much real value. Some books, for example, are reported to appeal to students from grades one through nine.

The book in the middle of Figure 14 contains a list of lists; i.e., it tells the teacher where to look to find information concerning the reading difficulty of trade books for children. It is:

> Henry A. Bamman, et. al., Reading Instruction in the Secondary Schools (New York: Longmans, Green and Company, 1961).

The book on the left in Figure 15 on page 108 is:

> Ruth Strang, Gateways to Readable Books (third edition; New York: The H. W. Wilson Company, 1958).

Books are listed according to subject area; such as, "animal life and adventure" and "history and geography." The reading level for each book is given.

The magazine on the right in Figure 15 is The Horn Book Magazine for April, 1961. It is published every two months by The Horn Book, Inc., of Boston. Publishers list

their new books, giving the age levels for which the books have been designed. However, one ought to expect a wide spread in the age levels given for each book; for it is only natural for the publisher to want his books to appeal to as many children as possible.

In summary, a teacher may use a formula or refer to a list to determine the approximate difficulty of a book. She must always keep in mind, however, the advice given by Strang, et. al.:

> The ultimate test is the student's comprehension of the material, regardless of its readability index. . . .[40]

VII. ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF INDIVIDUALIZED READING

Mania has cited the advantages claimed for the individualized approach to reading instruction:

1. Because no one set of graded readers is emphasized and because the individualized program is based upon the self-selection of materials by pupils, the material each child is exposed to will depend upon his own particular needs, interests, purposes, and abilities.

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[40] Ruth Strang, et. al., Problems in the Improvement of Reading (second edition; New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1955), p. 330.

2. Each child is allowed to work at a pace that is comfortable for him. A skill is taught only when the need for it is clearly evident.

3. Instruction is on a one-to-one basis. The child receives the benefit of the teacher's undivided time. The teacher gets to know the students better.

4. It provides a more permissive atmosphere for learning.

5. It leads to a more favorable attitude toward learning in general.

6. Children learn to use books of all types.

7. A better integration with other language arts is possible.

8. Teachers assume the responsibility for teaching the skills rather than depending upon reading manuals and workbooks.[41]

The major arguments against the individualized reading approach appear to be these:

1. Proponents of the individualized approach assume that all pupils will accept the responsibility for making intelligent selections. This is not necessarily the case. Furthermore, it is difficult for the teacher to check whether the child has read all of these materials.

2. Individualized reading makes no provision for readiness. There is no preparation for the story to be read.

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[41] Frank Nania, "Individualized Reading: Pro and Con," Grade Teacher, LXXVIII (April, 1961), 13, 112.

3. Limited time and large classes make it difficult to conduct this program effectively.

4. Unless the teacher is extremely proficient in her ability to diagnose pupils' weaknesses, she may miss finding some of the skill areas in which help is needed. Even competent teachers may have difficulty in determining such needs because the time she has at her disposal is so limited.

5. The amount of bookkeeping required of teachers and pupils may well cause negative attitudes.

6. Skill development is neglected because of the lack of a sequential program of development.[42]

VIII. WHAT RESEARCH HAS DISCOVERED ABOUT THE RESULTS OF INDIVIDUALIZED READING

The individualized approach to reading instruction has come about because of dissatisfaction with the results obtained through the use of ability grouping. How do the results of individualized reading compare with the results of ability grouping? In a number of cases research has been employed in an effort to determine the answer to this question.

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[42] Ibid., p. 112-114.

Considerable improvement under the individualized approach. In 1957 two fourth-grade teachers at Northwestern State College's Elementary School in Louisiana began an individualized reading program with their fourth-grade students. Fowler has reported the results after three years:

> Interest in reading is very high among the fourth-year pupils. The pupils and teachers are very happy in their reading program, and are reading and reading [italics in the original]. A majority of the pupils read from thirty to seventy-five books on their reading level each year. A few of the children read over a hundred books in a school term. Before the study was begun most pupils read fewer than ten books at the fourth-year level. Achievement tests and teacher observation show that a majority of the pupils progressed more than 1.5 grade levels in reading each year, compared to less than one grade level made by a majority of the fourth-year pupils before this program was begun. . . [43]

Slight, but insignificant, differences in gains made. Two classes in the Los Angeles County Schools participated in an individualized reading program during the 1955-56 school year. Jenkins has reported ". . . that the pupils made slightly, though not significantly, more progress

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[43] L. F. Fowler, "The R[eading] I[nterest] S[haring] I[nstruction] Individualized Reading Program," The Reading Teacher, XIV (November, 1960), 101-102.

in skill development than pupils in the regular program."[44]

Jenkins has gone on to state:

> . . . It is in the evaluation of progress toward other important objectives of reading instruction where self-selection has been most effective. The children who have participated in self-selection seem to have developed an abiding interest in reading, found keen enjoyment in it, developed the ability to select suitable materials for reading, and above all have developed the habit of reading beyond that which has been achieved in our regular program.[45]

No significant gains made. Karlin has reported on an experiment conducted in Michigan where two groups of children (matched for reading ability, I.Q., and socio-economic status) were taught by student teachers under the supervision of critic teachers. One group followed a basal-reader approach, while the other engaged in individualized reading. The results reported were as follows:

> . . . The data show no significant differences between the groups in reading gains. The student teachers did report that the children in the individualized group showed greater interest in reading more books than the children in the basal-reader group. . . .[46]

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[44] Marian Jenkins, "Self-selection in Reading," The Reading Teacher, XI (December, 1957), 90.

[45] Ibid.

[46] Robert Karlin, "Some Reactions to Individualized Reading," The Reading Teacher, XI (December, 1957), 98-99.

Approximately equal gains made. Sartain has described "The Roseville Experiment with Individualized Reading." It was conducted to see whether second-graders would make greater progress in reading skills when taught by the method of self-selection or when taught by the method of ability grouping using basic readers plus a variety of supplementary books. The rotational method of experimentation was employed. Ten second-grade classes were included in the study. During the first three months of school, five of the ten classes were taught by the individualized-reading approach, while the other five were taught in ability groups using basic readers plus a variety of supplementary books. During the next three months, the situation was reversed. Those who had been taught by the individualized approach were now taught in ability groups. Those who had been taught in ability groups were now introduced to individualized reading. The results showed that:

1. All of the students made greater gains during the first three months of school than during the second three months, no matter which method was used.

2. Capable students made approximately the same gains in reading under both methods.

3. The slower pupils made greater vocabulary gains when following the basal reader.[47]

Inferior results under individualized reading. In 1958 Safford conducted a study to evaluate the self-selective reading program as it was employed in one of the local elementary school districts in Los Angeles County in California. Seven classes (which included grades 3, 4, 5, and 6) were found to be employing individualized reading. One hundred eighty-three students were included. No effort was made to equate the seven classes with model or "normal" classes within the district. (Thus the study was not a "classical" experiment.) However, the average I.Q. for the students of the study group was approximately equal to the average I.Q. for all of the students of the district. At the end of the school year, the achievement made by the students of the study group was compared with national norms and district norms. Growth in reading was measured by the California Achievement Test Battery, Primary and Elementary, Form DD. The results

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[47] Harry W. Sartain, "The Roseville Experiment with Individualized Reading," The Reading Teacher, XIII (April, 1960), 277-281.

were as follows:

> . . . None of the seven classes, as a group, came even close to the national norm of a gain of 1.0 year, let alone to the district's higher norm of a gain of 1.25 years in total reading achievement.[48]

Interpretation. A look at the findings of research indicates that much confusion still exists as to the effectiveness of individualized reading. As the research cited on the previous pages demonstrates, one can find evidence to support almost any stand he wishes to take on the matter of the effectiveness of individualized reading. However, the only conclusion that can safely be drawn from the studies cited is that individualized reading increases interest in and enjoyment of reading. (See Figure 16 on page 118.)

If one is to be prudent and unbiased, he must agree with Sartain that:

> Confronted with these inconsistent views and findings, the teacher should weigh carefully the evidence already in and be alert to note new evidence, especially of an experimental and unbiased nature.[49]

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[48] Alton L. Safford, "Evaluation of an Individualized Reading Program," The Reading Teacher, XIII (April, 1960), 266-270.

[49] Harry W. Sartain, "A Bibliography on Individualized Reading," The Reading Teacher, XIII (April, 1960), 263.

FIGURE 16

INDIVIDUALIZED READING INCREASES INTEREST IN AND ENJOYMENT OF READING

IX. MODIFIED APPROACHES TO INDIVIDUALIZED READING

Modified approaches to individualized reading include partial individualization and the eclectic approach.

Partial individualization. The teacher who is afraid to commit herself completely to individualized reading may only partially individualize the reading program in her classroom. Darrow and Howes have described how one teacher individualized her reading program in the pacing of reading, but not in the selection of books:

> . . . Each child continued to read in the basic text used in his group, but now proceeded as fast as he could. When he completed the basic text the child received a book on the next level in the series or another book on the same level if he needed to strengthen his learnings.
>
> Only after children had advanced to an independent reading level of second grade materials were they entirely free to select their next reading material. They chose storybooks, content-centered texts, and new readers. . . .[50]

Self-selection may be employed even when a basal text is used:

> Since free choice of material is the goal, you can make a first step by letting the members of any one of your groups choose their own stories from the group's reader for one day and see what

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[50] Darrow and Howes, op. cit., p. 14.

> happens. Or, you might have everybody read as usual from a basal text in the morning and from self-selected books in the afternoon, with some time allowed for oral reading to you or to the whole class. But remember that to the extent that you are choosing the selection, you are not allowing the self-selection process to motivate reading.[51]

Partial individualization may also be accomplished by having conferences with individual children ". . . at odd moments that your schedule allows."[52]

The eclectic approach. The eclectic approach utilizes the best from both the basal reader approach and the individualized reading program. The eclectic approach differs from partial individualization in that the former does not imply that the program might someday become completely individualized. Gray has effectively stated the position of those who advocate the eclectic approach:

> An open-minded survey of research and of the experience of teachers who have used basal reading programs and the better types of "individualized reading" procedures will enable one to see that the best teaching will combine the good features of both methods [italics not in the original]. The

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[51] Jeannette Veatch, Individualizing Your Reading Program (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1959), p. 57.

[52] Ibid.

> best work with basal books embodies individual teaching, and the best "individualized teaching" includes whole class and subgroup activities and the use of materials taken from, or identical in principle with, basal readers and workbooks. We should nip in the bud the idea, now beginning to emerge, that one must accept one or the other of two antagonistic systems. We must undertake to discern the good features of each and attempt to embody them into what should be a better system than either.[53]

Witty concurs with Gray, for Witty has stated:

> It seems that a defensible program in reading will combine the best features of both individual and group instruction in reading. . . .[54]

One series of basal readers, the Winston series, has presented a plan for the eclectic approach which combines the use of the basal reader and self-selection. It has been recommended by the Winston series that the class time devoted to reading be divided equally. For example, one week, two of the five periods may be devoted to self-selection while three of the five periods are devoted to the use of the basal reader. The following week three of the five periods are devoted to the use of self-selection while two periods

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[53] William S. Gray, "Role of Group and Individualized Teaching in a Sound Reading Program," The Reading Teacher, XI (December, 1957), 104.

[54] Paul Witty, "Individualized Reading--A Summary and Evaluation," Elementary English, XXXVI (October, 1959), 450.

are used for work in the basal reader.[55]

According to this plan, the basal reader is used as it commonly is used when ability grouping is employed. Students are divided into ability groups, the stories are taught in the order in which they are presented in the book, and skills and words are taught according to the plan in the manual.[56]

Self-selection and individual conferences are used in much the same manner as they are used in a completely individualized program. One major difference is that under this plan the individual conference is not used to determine when a student is ready to learn reading skills such as phonetic analysis or structural analysis, for the basal reader dictates this. The conferences are used to discover which students need additional help.[57]

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[55]Russell G. Stauffer, et. al., Teachers' Manual for Away We Go (Philadelphia: The John C. Winston Company, 1960), pp. 33-42.

[56]Ibid.

[57]Ibid.

X. PRESENT STATUS OF INDIVIDUALIZED READING

In December of 1958 Gates wrote that he had, during the two preceding years, ". . . obtained various facts about the materials and methods of teaching reading in a large sampling of schools in all parts of the country."[58] The areas from which Gates obtained his data included ". . . a small town in California, a rural county in Georgia, a rapidly growing trading center in New Mexico, an agricultural center in Missouri, industrial cities in northern New York, Ohio and Michigan, residential suburban communities in several states, metropolitan cities such as New York and others. . . ."[59] Gates found that about 99 per cent of the school systems investigated used basal readers:

> . . . Many use one series for "basal" work exclusively in grades one and two; others use two series co-basally, and many use more than two, especially in grades four and above. . . .[60]

This implies that 1 per cent or fewer of these systems were using the individualized approach. It indicates that individualized reading is only a trend at the present

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[58] Arthur I. Gates, "Improvements in Reading Possible in the Near Future," The Reading Teacher, XII (December, 1958), 86.

[59] Ibid. [60] Ibid., p. 84.

time; but, as Fay has stated, individualized reading ". . . is the most widely discussed trend in the teaching of reading at the present time. . . ."[61]

XI. A SUMMARY OF THE MAIN POINTS OF THE CHAPTER

Individualized reading was regarded as a "newer" practice in 1938. It was not until 1952, however, that it gained national recognition. Since that time individualized reading has developed into the most widely discussed trend in the field of reading instruction.

Individualized reading has the following characteristics:

1. Self-selection of materials by pupils for their own instruction.
2. Individual conferences between each pupil and the teacher.
3. Groups organized for other than reasons of ability or proficiency in reading.
4. Pacing.

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[61] Fay, loc. cit.

(Appendix D on pages 176-180 contains an NEA article on individualized reading, which provides basic information about the program.)

Record keeping is an integral part of the individualized reading program. Both the student and the teacher must keep records.

Many books (at least two or three per pupil) covering a wide area of interests and a wide range of reading levels are needed. The school and community libraries can provide many books for the program. If these libraries prove to be inadequate, the teacher will need to find other sources from which to get books. Other materials, including magazines, pamphlets, brochures, and newspapers, may be used in the individualized reading program.

Both advantages and disadvantages arise from the use of individualized reading. Experiments have been conducted in an effort to determine the effectiveness of individualized reading, but the only conclusion at which one can safely arrive is that individualized reading increases interest in and enjoyment of reading. More research needs to be done.

Modified approaches to individualized reading include partial individualization and the eclectic approach. When a

cautious teacher wishes to experiment with individualized instruction without converting her whole reading program to the individualized plan, she may individualize only part of it. Those educators who recognize the values in both the basal-reader program and the individualized-reading program advocate the the eclectic approach, which employs the best methods from both plans.

At the present time, individualized reading is only a trend; for Gray found that 99 per cent of the school systems investigated by him employed the basal-reader approach. This means that only 1 per cent or fewer of the schools were using individualized reading.

CHAPTER VII

SUMMARY, GENERALIZATIONS, CONCLUSION, AND APPLICATION OF FINDINGS

I. SUMMARY

It was the purpose of this thesis to present an historical study to show (1) that there is evidence to indicate that reading instruction may complete a cycle (from individualized instruction in colonial days to individualized instruction in the future), but (2) that the individualized instruction of today is qualitatively different from that of colonial days.

The petty or dame school was a European institution that was transplanted to this country from England by the early settlers of the New England Colonies. The dame school was usually kept in the kitchen or living room of a home by some woman who, having obtained the rudiments of an education in her youth, desired to earn a few cents. It was here that the neighborhood children learned the alphabet and the beginnings of reading and spelling. The commonest instrument of reading instruction was the hornbook. Reading instruction

in the dame school was individualized; i.e., the children were called to the teacher one at a time to be instructed. The individualized instruction at this time was, at least in part, the result of necessity; for there were few educational materials available. In some cases there was only one hornbook in the dame school.

By the middle of the eighteenth century the district school had come into existence. Instruction was still on an individual basis. Children came forward to the teacher's desk and recited individually to the instructor. The weakness of this procedure lay in the fact that there was little or no real instruction. The method was merely memoritor in nature; i.e., the student merely repeated, often verbatim, what he had read in the book. As in the dame school, this individualized instruction was, at least in part, the result of necessity. In the dame school it had been necessary to individualize instruction because of a scarcity of materials. However, the situation was quite the opposite in the district school, where instruction had to be individualized because of the fact that there were too many books on the market. After the Revolutionary War the market was flooded with American

textbooks (the most outstanding of which was Noah Webster's American Spelling Book). Each child in the district school had to furnish his own book, and he was allowed to follow his own volition or that of his parents in selecting it. The result was that teachers often had large schools with nearly every child reading from a different book. Naturally these students had to be taught individually.

Joseph Lancaster, a young English schoolmaster, was the first to introduce effective group instruction to the American educational scene. Lancaster used students, known as monitors, in instructing the rest of the students in the school. The teacher taught the monitors a lesson from a printed card. Then each monitor took the students under his direction to their "station" around the wall where he proceeded to teach them the lesson he had learned. By this method it was possible to teach from 200 to 1,000 students in one room. The monitorial system demonstrated the value not only of grouping, but of using graded material as well; for minute systems were used in grading the subject matter taught in the monitorial schools.

The Lancastrian monitorial school had shown the practicality of group instruction at a time when circumstances were making it possible, and perhaps even desirable, for the graded school system to develop. Children in the newly developed grade school were grouped according to age, and all were expected to master the same amount of material in the same length of time. Reading instruction, as well as other instruction in the school, was extremely Procrustean in nature, attempting to fit the child to a preconceived pattern. The seven books constituting the series of readers developed by William Holmes McGuffey were the outstanding books in the field of reading instruction during the early days of the graded school.

The Procrustean nature of instruction in the graded school was not satisfactory. The early 1900's saw the development of tests of all types (intelligence tests, achievement tests, reading tests, and others) which provided concrete, objective proof of individual differences. It was between the years 1918 and 1925, after the development of these tests, that ability grouping in reading was first advocated.

In the past years ability grouping has been strongly criticized for not producing the desired results. Individualized instruction is once again coming into prominence, for individualized reading is the most widely discussed trend in the teaching of reading today. Such instruction is based upon the knowledge that no two children are exactly alike and the belief that seldom are two children ready to be taught from the same material at the same time. Individualized reading has the following characteristics:

1. Self-selection of materials by pupils for their own instruction.

2. Individual conferences between each pupil and the teacher.

3. Groups organized for other than reasons of ability or proficiency in reading.

4. Pacing.

Trade books, which are bright and colorful and prepared especially for children, are the instruments of instruction commonly used when individualized reading is employed. The findings of research as to the effectiveness of such instruction are conflicting, but it can safely be stated that individualized reading increases interest in and enjoyment of reading.

II. GENERALIZATIONS

The hypothesis was divided into two parts. The generalizations have been divided and are listed below under the parts of the hypothesis to which they belong.

1. There is evidence to indicate that reading instruction may complete a cycle (from individualized instruction in colonial days to individualized instruction in the future).

    a. Reading instruction in the dame and district schools was individualized.

    b. The monitorial or Lancastrian school showed the practicality of group instruction and accustomed people to the idea of using graded material for instructional purposes.

    c. The grade school developed, replacing the individualized instruction of the dame and district school with group instruction.

    d. Because group instruction did not adequately provide for individual differences, ability grouping was introduced.

    e. Dissatisfaction with ability grouping has been accompanied by recommendations for the use of other teaching techniques. At the present time individualized reading is the most widely discussed trend in the teaching of reading.

2. The individualized instruction of today is qualitatively different from that of colonial days.

   a. Individualized instruction in the dame and district schools was, at least in part, the result of necessity. When individualized instruction is used today, it is used because the educator feels it to be the best way to teach the child.

   b. In the dame and district schools students were taught to read by the alphabet method. Today reading instruction teaches the child to use a variety of approaches; such as, sight vocabulary, phonetic analysis, structural analysis, context clues, and, as a last resort, the dictionary.

   c. Individualized instruction in the dame and district schools tended to be mere listening to recitations. By contrast, an important part of the individualized instruction of today is determining the reading needs of each pupil and providing for these.

   d. In the dame school there was often only one book to be used by many pupils. Although the teacher of the district school was plagued by a multiplicity of books, each pupil used only one reading book. In the individualized reading program of today, however, each pupil reads many books, including basal readers and trade books.

   e. The books of today are bright, colorful, and especially designed for children. Such was not the case with the hornbook of the dame school and the numerous books of the district school.

III. CONCLUSION

Considering the generalisations stated above, it is concluded that there is evidence to indicate that reading instruction may complete a cycle (from individualized instruction in colonial days to individualized instruction in the future), but that the individualized instruction of today is qualitatively different from the individualized instruction of the colonial period. Thus the hypothesis has been verified.

IV. APPLICATION OF FINDINGS

In a public address Governor De Witt Clinton of New York referred to the monitorial school as "a blessing sent down from heaven." Although the monitorial school did influence American education, it was far from being "a blessing sent down from heaven"; and it eventually passed out of existence in this country.

The elementary teachers of today are asking about the "new" individualized reading. "Is it an infelicitous

fad or is it the answer to a teacher's anguished prayers?"[1]

The mistake made both by De Witt Clinton and by the elementary teachers is that of expecting to find a panacea for the problems of education. Such an attitude tends to cause educators to take sides in "methodological squabbles" when they should evaluate objectively all methods in order to benefit from the best in each. A knowledge of the history of reading instruction will help the teacher to do this, for it will show her that change has been the rule in the past and that no method of reading instruction has been completely satisfactory for the purposes of all teachers and all students.

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[1]Harry W. Sartain, "A Bibliography on Individualized Reading," The Reading Teacher, XIII (April, 1960), 262.

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APPENDIX A

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE AMERICAN SCHOOL FROM THE DAME SCHOOL THROUGH THE GRADED SCHOOL

APPENDIX A

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE AMERICAN SCHOOL FROM THE DAME SCHOOL THROUGH THE GRADED SCHOOL

Reading instruction in the United States has been closely related to the development of the school in this country. For that reason a brief history of the elementary school in America from the dame school through the evolution of the grade school is presented here.

I. THE DAME SCHOOL

The petty or dame school was transplanted to this country at the time of the early settlements. It was a very elementary school which was usually kept in the kitchen or living room of a home by some woman who, having obtained the rudiments of an education in her youth, desired to earn a few cents.[1]

It was here that the neighborhood children learned the alphabet and the beginnings of reading and spelling.

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[1]Ellwood P. Cubberley, Public Education in the United States: A Study and Interpretation of American Educational History (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1934), p. 27; and Edgar W. Knight, Education in the United States (third revised edition; Boston: Ginn and Company, 1951), p. 120.

According to Cubberley, a small amount of sewing and knitting was frequently taught; and occasionally, but not often, a little writing and counting were also taught.[2] Noble has emphasized the fact that the education of the seventeenth century was very limited in scope at the elementary level:

> It is not even correct to say that the education was limited to the field of the three R's, for writing and arithmetic were not always included.[3]

The purpose of the dame school was to give the boys the learning that was required for entrance to the Latin grammar school and to give the girls all the education that they were believed to need.[4] That the teacher in a dame school did not take her teaching too seriously can be seen

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[2]Cubberley, loc. cit.

[3]Stuart G. Noble, A History of American Education (revised edition; New York: Rinehart and Company, Inc., 1954), p. 24.

[4]Edwin Grant Dexter, A History of Education in the United States (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1922), p. 425.

from the following comment by Cubberley:

> The school dame usually did not find the labor of teaching very heavy. An interesting instance to show this is found in the annals of Northfield, Massachusetts. The first teacher in the town was a dame, with four children of her own, who was hired to care for a class of little ones for "twenty-two weeks in the warm season." The semi-leisure of the school room allowed her to work making shirts for the Indians at 8 pence each, and breeches at IS 6d a pair, besides caring for her own household.[5]

This point has been further elaborated by Johnson:

> The school dame did not usually find the labor of teaching very onerous. While she heard the smaller pupils recite their letters, and the older ones read and spell from their primers, she busied her fingers with knitting and sewing, and in the intervals between lessons sometimes worked at the spinning wheel. . . .[6]

Dexter has pointed out that at first the dame school was a private venture. However, as time went on, it proved its usefulness as an institution and was commonly supported, at least in part, by the town.[7] Knight has expressed this

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[5]Cubberley, op. cit., p. 27.

[6]Clifton Johnson, Old-Time Schools and School-Books (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1925), p. 25.

[7]Edwin Grant Dexter, A History of Education in the United States (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1922), p. 425.

same idea in a little different manner:

> . . . It was a private and local neighborhood arrangement, or it was semipublic and recognized by the town authorities and sometimes assisted by them, or it was entirely public, especially in the summer season. It grew out of the family responsibility of teaching children the rudiments of learning. Not infrequently a woman in teaching her own children would include other children in the neighborhood. Tuition fees were generally charged in the private and semipublic dame schools.[8]

The dame school, Dexter has stated, ". . . was never held as an institution of much consequence or dignity."[9] Be that as it may, ". . . the dame school flourished greatly in America during the eighteenth century. . . ."[10]

II. DEVELOPMENT OF THE DISTRICT SCHOOL

Inadequacy of the former system. In the beginning the people of New England lived together in small, compact towns. At this time it was quite adequate to have all

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[8]Knight, loc. cit.

[9]Dexter, loc. cit.

[10]Ellwood P. Cubberley, Public Education in the United States: A Study and Interpretation of American Educational History (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1934), p. 27.

educational facilities located within the town.[11]

Things have a way of changing, however. Originally the New Englanders were held together by ". . . fear of savages, religious fervor, the strong feeling of social unity, and the method of granting land by the town,[12] as well as the tradition of the mother country. . . ."[13] These influences gradually lost their strength and the population began to increase. The result was that by the beginning of the eighteenth century, the population of New England had begun to spread out over the land.[14] It

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[11]Paul Monroe, Founding of the American Public School System (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1940), pp. 116-117.

[12]The rigid control exercised by the church in early colonial times was reflected in a law of 1635 which required settlers to live within a half mile of the church. However, this law was repealed five years later. [Monroe, op. cit., p. 118.]

[13]Monroe, op. cit., p. 118.

[14]Paul Monroe, Founding of the American Public School System (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1940), p. 118; and Stuart G. Noble, A History of American Education (revised edition; New York: Rinehart and Company, Inc., 1954), p. 112.

is not difficult to predict the effect of such a situation upon education:

> . . . Many, living at a distance from the village, were now unable, particularly in bad weather, to send their children to the town school which they were taxed to support. These asked the town authorities to share school facilities with them. . . .[15]

The moving school. The first effort "to share school facilities" took the form of the moving school. The town schoolmaster, employed on a yearly basis, was instructed to divide his time, teaching a few weeks in each of the rural communities.[16] Good has described this situation as follows:

> . . . To serve the more isolated families the teacher began to move from place to place within the town, teaching a few months in one village and a similar time in another. Sometimes the school was held for short periods in as many as six places in a town. In 1710 in the town of Malden the teacher was required to teach in three places; in 1737 in Lunenburg in four places; and in 1725 in Harwich in six. In this last-cited case the lengths of the term at each stand varied from four months to almost nine, and three and one-half years were needed to complete one round. Obviously some of the children would attend only a single term in three or four years. But this was an extreme case. . . .[17]

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[15] Noble, op. cit., p. 112.

[16] Monroe, op. cit., pp. 118-119; and Noble, op. cit., pp. 112-113.

[17] H. G. Good, A History of American Education (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1956), p. 42.

The district school. As one can well imagine, the "moving school" was unsatisfactory. "Finally," Noble has stated, "the outlying communities asked the town for their portion of the property tax[18] and agreed to maintain their own 'district' schools independently of the town."[19] The district form of organization was everywhere in control by 1830 to 1835 and was at the height of its powers. It had begun to decline by 1840 to 1850.[20]

Quality of instruction. It seems likely that the instruction in the average district school was not of high quality. Henry Ward Beecher has stated, "It was our misfortune [italics not in the original], in boyhood, to go

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[18] "The town school," Noble has stated, "was at first supported in large part by tuition fees; later by pro-rata assessments (called 'rates') on parents whose children attended the schools; and still later, in some of the towns, by a general property tax." [Noble, op. cit., p. 112.]

[19] Noble, op. cit., p. 112.

[20] Ellwood P. Cubberley, Public Education in the United States: A Study and Interpretation of American Educational History (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1934), pp. 315-316.

to a District School."[21] With regard to the instruction he received, Beecher has commented:

> . . . We were read and spelt twice a day, unless something happened to prevent, which did happen about every other day. For the rest of the time we were busy in keeping still. . . .[22]

The teachers of the district school. Descriptions of the district school teacher vary all the way from that of a little, withered old maid to that of a big, husky, whip-cracking man. The fact is that both extremes were likely to be truly descriptive of a teacher in a district school. Good has explained how this paradox could exist:

> Another device of the district school was the provision of two terms in a year, a winter term for the big boys and girls who were released from much of the farm work at that season and a summer term for little children. The winter term was apt to be rough, not in regard to the weather only, and the teacher had to be a strong and resolute man. In the summer terms girls were given an opportunity to teach. . . .[23]

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[21] Henry Ward Beecher, "School Reminiscence of the Reverend Henry Ward Beecher in Connecticut, About 1830," cited by Stuart G. Noble, A History of American Education (revised edition; New York: Rinehart and Company, Inc., 1954), pp. 408-409.

[22] Ibid.

[23] Good, op. cit., p. 42.

Johnson has said the following about the male teacher of the district school:

> Generally the teacher was young, sometimes not more than sixteen years old; but if he was expert at figures, if he could read the Bible without stumbling over the long words, if he could mend a pen, if he had vigor enough of character to assert his authority, and strength enough of arm to maintain it, he would do.[24]

The female teacher, on the other hand, often had to use "pull" in order to get a position in the district school. In many cases a female's opportunities for becoming a teacher in the district school depended upon being related to the right person:

> The law ordered that the teachers should have good moral character and competence to teach the required branches. What furnished a woman, however, the surest passport to employment was to be related to some prudential committeeman. He was all-powerful in his district, and while his daughters or sisters, of course, had first chance, if none among these closer relatives had anxiety for the place, there was opportunity for the more remotely connected. . . .[25]

Usually the women teachers were young, ambitious girls, eager to earn enough to allow them to attend an academy for a term or two. Most of them married later; but

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[24] Johnson, op. cit., p. 121.

[25] Ibid., pp. 135-136.

others lived on as schoolmarms, ". . . sometimes sweetening as they ripened, sometimes quite the contrary."[26]

III. THE LANCASTRIAN OR MONITORIAL SCHOOL

The monitorial school was so called because pupils, called "monitors," were appointed to teach the other students. For the same reason, the schools were also referred to as "mutual instruction schools." Because they were patterned after a plan devised by Joseph Lancaster, they were called Lancastrian schools in honor of the English schoolmaster.

The origin of the monitorial school. The monitorial school, like many other things in the educational system of early America, was borrowed from England. In 1797 an English clergyman by the name of Andrew Bell published a work entitled "An Experiment in Education." It described a method of mutual instruction called "the Madras System." Bell had developed this system and had used it in an orphan asylum in India.[27] Another Englishman, Joseph Lancaster, a young schoolmaster, needed additional teachers for his school.

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[26] Ibid., p. 135.

[27] Good, op. cit., p. 136.

Because he lacked the money to pay for the additional teachers, Lancaster turned to the use of monitors, the method which Andrew Bell had used a few years earlier. It appears, however, that Lancaster arrived at his system independently, in spite of the fact that his plan closely resembled Bell's.[28] In any event, "the idea of monitorial instruction was old when these two men made practical use of it."[29]

It was the Lancastrian plan that was brought to this country. The first monitorial school in America was opened in New York in 1806 through the influence of the Public School Society of that city.[30] "The system," according to Cubberley, "quickly spread from Massachusetts to Georgia, and as far west as Cincinnati, Louisville and Detroit."[31]

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[28]Cubberley, op. cit., pp. 128-129; Knight, op. cit., p. 163; and "Monitorial System," Collier's Encyclopedia (1959 ed.), XIV, 95.

[29]Knight, op. cit., p. 163.

[30]Cubberley, op. cit., p. 129; and Knight, op. cit., p. 166.

[31]Cubberley, op. cit., p. 129.

In fact, the monitorial system was so loudly acclaimed that North Carolina and Maryland proposed, and the latter actually adopted a state system of schools based upon it.[32] The ephemeral quality of the popularity of the monitorial system has been described by Cubberley:

> The system was very popular from about 1815 to about 1830, though by 1830, as the defects[33] of the monitorial plan became evident, its popularity as a means for providing education was clearly on the wane. By 1840 it had almost generally been abandoned, outside of New York City, where it continued in partial use until 1853. . . .[34]

Characteristics of the monitorial school. Figure 17 on page 156 is a plan of a Lancastrian monitorial schoolroom.[35] The rows of seats were down the middle. The "stations" where the monitors took their classes can be seen along the walls.

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[32] Knight, op. cit., p. 166.

[33] Some of the criticisms leveled against the Lancastrian plan were that it was too militaristic and that it was not adapted to the mental and cultural needs of the child. [Cubberley, op. cit., p. 137; and Good, op. cit., p. 136.]

[34] Cubberley, op. cit., p. 137.

[35] Figure 17 was taken from: Edgar W. Knight, Education in the United States (third revised edition; Boston: Ginn and Company, 1951), p. 164.

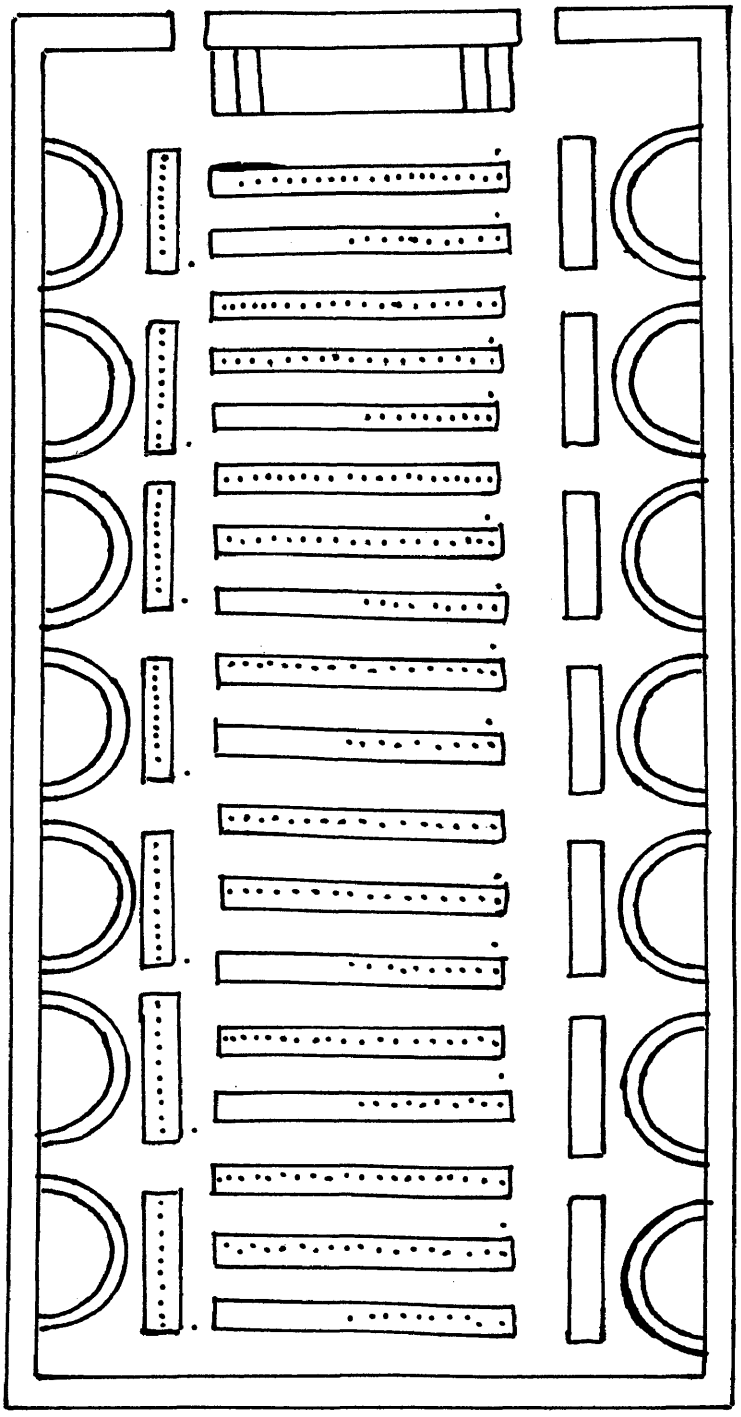

FIGURE 17

A PLAN OF A LANCASTRIAN
MONITORIAL SCHOOLROOM

The students stood in the semicircles facing the wall where charts were hung. It was from these charts that the monitors conducted their classes and taught their lessons. Monroe has described the technique as follows:

> . . . Lessons were printed on large battledores or charts, or written on movable (or portable) blackboards. These were suspended from hooks on the wall, and before each a group gathered under its monitor. . . .[36]

The rectangular areas in front of the semicircles in Figure 17 were used for aligning the students in straight rows. The Lancastrian school was very militaristic. "Pupils rose, marched, wheeled, sat down, and took up their books at a word of command."[37] In the figure, seven of the monitors have their charges lined up in front of the semicircles, while the rest of the students are at their seats.

Cubberley has given the following description of the group instruction used in the monitorial school:

> The essential features of the Lancastrian plan were the collection of a large number of pupils in one room, from 200 to 1000 being possible. . . . The pupils were sorted and seated in rows, and to each row was assigned a clever boy who was known as a monitor, and who was the key to the entire system. A common number for each monitor to

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[36] Monroe, op. cit., p. 368.

[37] Good, op. cit., p. 136.

> instruct and look after was ten. The teacher first taught these monitors a lesson from a printed card, and then the monitors, "youthful corporals of the teacher's regiment," took their rows to "stations" about the wall and proceeded to teach the other boys what they had just learned.[38]

It can be seen that under such a system the teacher was little more than an organizer. The monitors did most of the work:

> . . . When a child was admitted, a monitor assigned him his class; while he remained, a monitor taught him (with nine other pupils); when he was absent, one monitor ascertained the fact and another found out the reason; a monitor examined him periodically, and when he made progress a monitor promoted him; a monitor ruled the writing paper, a monitor had charge of the slates or books, and a monitor-general looked after all the other monitors.[39]

Lancaster himself wrote, "The master should be a by-stander and inspector."[40]

In addition to being an inspector, the schoolmaster was the distributor of rewards and punishments; for the Lancastrian system relied heavily upon extrinsic rewards.

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[38] Cubberley, op. cit., pp. 131-132.

[39] Knight, op. cit., p. 164.

[40] Cubberley, op. cit., p. 131.

Concerning the rewards used in the monitorial system, Good has said:

> . . . For rewards, there were badges, offices, and orders of merit. By such means he avoided the use of the strap; but they tended to make the children conceited and priggish and did not increase their love of knowledge or their desire to co-operate with others.[41]

Monroe has stated that "Lancaster practically abolished corporal punishment. . . ."[42] This means that the rod was no longer used as a means of punishment. The methods substituted for the rod, however, were far from desirable:

> . . . Ridicule and original methods of punishment were substituted for the rod. Lancaster wrote that a boy who had been repeatedly idle had a wooden log fastened on his neck, or his legs were shackled together until he was so tired of walking in that manner that he promised to reform. Truants were tied to their desks and incorrigible boys were sometimes tied in blankets and left to spend the night on the schoolroom floor. . . .[43]

Apparently some considered such methods of punishment as being

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[41] Good, op. cit., p. 136.

[42] Monroe, op. cit., p. 371.

[43] "Lancaster, Joseph," Collier's Encyclopedia (1959 ed.), XII, 104.

better than the rod, for it has been stated:

> . . . These punishments, now considered barbarous, were more humane than the conventional methods of beating the boys. . . .[44]

It has already been pointed out that the Lancastrian system was very militaristic. "Pupils rose, marched, wheeled, sat down, and took up their books at a word of command."[45] Two popular Lancastrian mottoes were:

> A place for everything and everything in its place.
>
> Let every child at every moment have something to do and a motive for doing it.[46]

Influences of the monitorial system on the American system of education. The monitorial school influenced American education in several ways. This method of instruction reduced tremendously the cost of education:

> . . . By use of the plan, one teacher with the aid of monitors could provide schooling for all the children of a community of moderate size. Group recitations, substituted for individual instruction, saved much time. The use of slates and sand tables saved paper, pens, and ink. Wall charts and blackboards made fewer books necessary. Altogether, the cheapness of the plan won friends to the cause of

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[44] Ibid.

[45] Good, op. cit., p. 136.

[46] Knight, op. cit., pp. 164-166.

> education and did much to stimulate interest among the many who had heretofore believed the cost of public schools prohibitive.[47]

The Lancastrian school could educate 500 or more pupils for as little as two or three dollars a year per pupil.[48] Furthermore, the Lancastrian schools ". . . made the common school common and much talked of, and awakened thought and provoked discussion on the question of public education."[49] Because of these factors "the Lancastrian schools . . . materially hastened the adoption of the free school system in all the Northern States. . . ."[50]

The monitorial system brought to the foreground the need for the training of teachers:

> The earliest recognized form of a specific training for the teacher was given in connection with the Lancasterian monitorial schools. If school teaching itself was not recognized as a special professional art the management of the

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[47] Noble, op. cit., p. 137.

[48] Good, op. cit., p. 136.

[49] Cubberley, op. cit., p. 136.

[50] Ibid.

> monitorial school was. So intricate was this mechanical device that its attainment might well be termed a "mystery" after the manner of the old crafts. . . .[51]

In 1818 the Lancastrian Model Schools were established for the purpose of training teachers. According to Cubberley, the Lancastrian Model Schools ". . . were the precursors of our normal schools."[52]

The Lancastrian schools popularized the idea of using graded materials:

> Little attempt was made to teach more than the rudiments of reading, writing, arithmetic. These subjects were very minutely graded and the pupils passed from one group to another in each subject as they mastered the materials in the given stage of the organization.
>
> Thus the advantages of individual promotion and promotion by subject, so difficult to obtain in the schools of today, were assured. The system also permitted great advance in the grading of schools. . . . In mathematics the classes were: 1st, addition and subtraction; 2d, addition and subtraction; 3d, multiplication and division; 4th, five first rules; 5th, reduction; 6th, rule of three; 7th, practice; 8th, interest. It is obvious that this scheme was superficial and quite different from a modern graded school system,

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[51] Monroe, op. cit., p. 490.

[52] Cubberley, op. cit., p. 137.

since it covered but two or three years' work. But it popularized the idea of grading and of class recitation, so that it was often known as "the simultaneous method."[53]

In summary, the Lancastrian monitorial schools influenced American education in the following ways:

1. It hastened the adoption of the free school system.
2. It demonstrated the need for teacher training.
3. It popularized the idea of grading.

IV. EVOLUTION OF THE GRADED SCHOOL

Factors leading to the development of the graded school. Betts has listed the following factors as those which helped bring about the development of the graded school:

1. The old-World organization of public schools on a class-distinction basis was counteracted in the United States by the development of a single, unitary system of free education.
2. The increase in the school population made imperative some type of revision.
3. An expansion of educational offerings--fostered somewhat by local autonomy--stimulated efforts toward improvement.

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[53]Monroe, op. cit., pp. 366-367.

4. The lengthening of the school term paved the way for a more nearly systematic organization.[54]

In addition to these factors, the Lancastrian system had shown the practicality of group instruction. Although the grading in the Lancastrian system was on an extremely minute basis, it did serve to familiarize the idea of grading:

> The Lancasterian monitorial plan introduced grading into the elementary school. But this division was based on steps so minute, as for example, the ability to spell words of one syllable, of two syllables, of three syllables, that the grades did not correspond to the present notion of classifying pupils. But at least the idea was made familiar. . . .[55]

William Holmes McGuffey, the first American author ". . . to produce a clearly defined and carefully graded series consisting of one reader for each grade in the elementary school,"[56] has been given credit by two authorities

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[54]Emmett Albert Betts, Foundations of Reading Instruction (New York: American Book Company, 1946), p. 16.

[55]Monroe, op. cit., p. 254.

[56]Nila Banton Smith, American Reading Instruction: Its Significance in Gaining a Perspective on Current Practices in Reading (New York: Silver, Burdett and Company, 1934), pp. 105-106.

for having contributed to the development of the graded system. Cubberley has stated:

> . . . That this graded series of Readers helped to establish the graded school with its class organization, there can be little question.[57]

Betts has lamented:

> By means of his graded series of readers, McGuffey unwittingly contributed to the regimentation of pupils. His work gave an impetus to the grade placement of subject matter at a time when there was a great need for the study of systematic sequences. . . .[58]

The evolution of the graded school. Cubberley has outlined the steps in the development or evolution of the graded school in this country:

> The first step in the evolution of the present class-grade organization of our schools was the division of the school system into schools of two or more different grades; such as Primary, Intermediate, Grammar, etc. . . . This began early, and was accomplished generally in our cities by 1840 to 1845.[59]

The second step in the development of the graded system employed the use of "ushers" to help the "master." Notice how closely this system resembles the Lancastrian

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[57] Cubberley, op. cit., p. 294.

[58] Betts, op. cit., p. 72.

[59] Cubberley, op. cit., pp. 229-232.

monitorial system:

> The next step in the evolution of the graded systems was the division of each school into classes. This also began early, certainly by 1810, and was fully accomplished in the cities by 1840. It began by the employment of assistant teachers, known as "ushers," to help the "master," and usually the provision of small recitation rooms, off the main large room, for their use in hearing recitations. . . .[60]

The third and final step involved a greater amount of subdivision:

> The third and final step in the evolution of the graded system was to build larger schools with smaller classrooms, or to subdivide the larger rooms; change the separate and independent and duplicate school on each floor, which had been the common plan for so long, into parts of one school building organization; sort and grade the pupils and outline the instruction by years; and the class system was at hand. This process began here and there in the decade of the thirties, and was largely accomplished in the cities by 1860. In the smaller places it came later, but usually was accomplished by or before 1875. In the rural districts class grading was not introduced until the last quarter of the nineteenth century.[61]

Cubberley has declared that the evolution of the graded school, which was fully accomplished in all northern states by 1860, "came naturally and easily."[62]

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[60] Ibid., pp. 309-310.

[61] Ibid., p. 311.

[62] Ibid., p. 314.

APPENDIX B

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE TESTING MOVEMENT

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A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE TESTING MOVEMENT

Before tests were developed, educators could only estimate a child's mental and educational level. Although the tests on the market today are not infallible, they do serve as reasonably accurate and objective guides to aid educators in evaluating students. The testing movement began in the last decade of the nineteenth century with the work of Dr. J. M. Rice. Since that time testing has expanded and developed and has had a great influence on reading instruction.

The first comparative test. Dr. J. M. Rice has been referred to as "the inventor of educational measurement."[1] It was he who developed the first comparative test. Rice had studied in Germany and had been influenced by the German psychologists at Jena and Leipsic. Upon returning to his native America, Rice developed the spelling scale

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[1]Leonard P. Ayres, "The Measurement of Educational Products," History and Present Status of Educational Measurements, The Seventeenth Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education, XVII (1918), 12.

in 1894.[2] Concerning his invention, Rice has said:

> . . . In truth, however, I came to recognize that this [the claims of school men following different courses of study] was all talk,--that no one really knew the facts, because there were no standards to serve as guides. Then one day, the idea flashed through my mind that the way to settle the question was to try it out. For a beginning I decided to take spelling, and on that very day I made up a list of 50 words with the view of giving them as a test to the pupils of the schools as I went on my tour from town to town. I have no record of the date of the inspiration, but I think it was some time in October, 1894.[3]

Before Rice was through, he had studied the spelling achievements of some 30,000 pupils. His findings showed that students who spent fifteen minutes a day to study spelling could spell as well as those who had devoted forty minutes a day to the subject. Rice incurred much criticism for his work, but his work ". . . was destined to open the door to the measurement movement."[4] By 1915 the animosity had died away,

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[2] Ibid.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Adolph E. Meyer, The Development of Education in the Twentieth Century. (New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1949), p. 425.

and the same persons who had criticized Rice and his study were now advocating the use of such testing with the same fervor with which they had once condemned it.[5]

The contributions of Judd and Thorndike. "If Dr. Rice is to be called the inventor of educational measurement," Ayres has said, "Professor E. L. Thorndike should be called the father of the movement."[6] Meyer has given equal credit to Judd: "From the seeds planted by Judd and Thorndike grew the measurement movement."[7] (According to Ayers, it was the publication in 1910 of the Thorndike Scale for the measurement of merit in handwriting, based on the equal difference theorem formulated by Cattell, which marked "the real beginning of the scientific measurement of educational products."[8])

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[5] Ibid.

[6] Ayers, loc. cit.

[7] Meyer, op. cit., p. 747.

[8] Ayers, loc. cit.

Thorndike and Judd spurred others on to measure educational products scientifically. Working under the direction of Thorndike at Columbia, C. W. Stone issued, in 1908, the first objective arithmetic reasoning test. From other students of Thorndike came the Hillegas Composition Scale, the Trabue Language Scale, the Buckingham Spelling Scale, and the Woody Fundamentals of Arithmetic Scale. From the students of Judd came studies such as: C. T. Gray's "Types of Reading Ability" (1917), F. N. Freeman's "The Handwriting Movement" (1918), and G. Buswell's "Experimental Study of the Eye-Voice in Reading" (1920).[9]

The Binet Intelligence Test. By 1895 Binet had started his efforts to develop a measurement of intelligence. By 1905 Alfred Binet and his co-worker Théodore Simon, a physician and neurologist, had prepared such a test of intelligence. However, the creators were not satisfied with their product; and they revised it in 1908 and again in 1911. This product of French minds was revised in 1916 by an American, Lewis Terman. It

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[9]Meyer, op. cit., pp. 426-427.

was revised a second time in 1937 and a third time in 1960 by Lewis Terman and Maud Merrill.[10]

Since the development of the Binet, numerous tests of intelligence, both individual and group tests, have been produced. However, the Stanford-Binet Scale of Intelligence ". . . has been so universally accepted that subsequent test makers have frequently established the validity of their own tests for measuring intelligence by showing how their results agree with those obtained with the Stanford-Binet."[11]

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[10] Meyer, op. cit., p. 424; Floyd L. Ruch, Psychology and Life (fourth edition; Chicago: Scott Foresman and Company, 1953), p. 80; and Lewis M. Terman and Maud A. Merrill, Stanford-Binet Intelligence Scale (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1960), pp. 5-20.

[11] Percival W. Hutson, The Guidance Function in Education (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1958), p. 379.

APPENDIX C

GRADED READING DIFFICULTY WORK SHEET

How to Find the "Graded Reading Difficulty" of a Book

According to the plan described in Chapter XXI of
"Problems in Reading," by E. W. Dolch.
The Garrard Press, Champaign, Ill.

1. Find Sentence Difficulty First

Sample the book by taking one sentence from every page. The first complete sentence at the top or bottom of the page is best.

A sentence is assumed to extend from capital to period, except when semicolons join independent statements without a conjunction. Count such statements separately. A sentence of conversation includes the part beginning, "said so-and-so."

Count the number of words in each sentence of the sampling. Include proper names. For each sentence make a check in column 2 on Worksheet No. 1 after the number in column 1 showing the number of words in the sentence.

Then add the number of checks on each line of column 2, and put the totals in column 3. Total up the numbers in column 3 to get the total number of sentences (Square A). Divide this total by 2 to find the length of the sentence which would be the Middle Sentence. For instance, if there are a total of 200 sentences, the 100th sentence is considered the middle one. (Square B.)

Find the Middle Sentence by counting down column 3 as many sentences as shown in Square B. When you find the Middle Sentence, how many words has that sentence in it? Put number in Square C. Compare the length of the Middle Sentence with the table of standards table at bottom of Worksheet No. 2 to find the grade. Put in Square D.

To find the Long Sentence, or the one with 10% of the sentences as long or longer, divide the total number of sentences by 10, and put the number in Square F. Then count this number of sentences up from the bottom of column 3 to find which sentence is the Long Sentence. How many words has the Long Sentence? Put in Square G. Compare this number of words with the standards table and put grade in Square H.

2. Find Word Difficulty

Multiply on each line of Worksheet No. 1 the number of sentences by the length of sentence; that is, multiply column 1 by column 3. For instance, if there are 20 sentences 12 words long, multiply 12 by 20 to find out how many words there are in this group of sentences. Put the products in column 4. Total all the numbers in column 4 to find the total number of words in the sampling (put on Worksheet 2, square L).

Turn to Worksheet No. 2. Check each of the chosen sentences of the sampling with the First Thousand Words in Children's Reading, in each sentence finding out how many words are **not** on the list. For each sentence make a check mark in column 6, opposite the number in column 5 which shows the number of words in that sentence **not** on the list. Do not count proper names as "not on the list," that is, as among the unknown words. Likewise, assume that each word on the list includes the ordinary variations of that word, with such endings as -s, -es, -d, -ed, -ing, -er, -est, and -ly (without regard to doubling of letters).

Total all the numbers in column 7. This gives the total number of words in the sampling **not** on the First Thousand (Square K). Divide the figure in Square K by the figure in Square L to find the percent that the Hard Words, those not on the list, are of the total words in the sampling (put in Square M). Compare this percent with the table of standards at bottom of Worksheet No. 2 to get the Graded difficulty on Hard Words (Square N).

3. Interpreting Results (Shown on page 1)

The figures you find may come between standards on the table. That is to be expected. If so, record the nearest grade or half grade. Some of your figures may be higher than given in the table, showing difficulty greater than Grade VI.

The three Grade placements you find may not agree. This is natural as a book may be easy in one respect and hard in another. You may average them, or go by the one you think most important. Word difficulty is usually felt to be more important than the others.

The book may be more difficult than your figures show because words may be just a little more difficult than the First Thousand, or they may be a great deal more difficult. They may also be on the First Thousand but have unusual meanings. Or there may be very difficult ideas expressed in rather simple words; using simple words does not always make an idea easy to understand.

From all the research to date, the three measures you have found seem to be the most fundamental in determining Graded Reading Difficulty. The comparison with the present graded readers seems to be the simplest and most effective way of determining Graded Reading Difficulty of new books.

Note—Watch for a source of error. A word not on the list may appear many times in the sample. But the word would not be hard after it had been used often. So to allow for this fact, do not count such a word as hard after the first ten times.

REVISED 1954

GRADED READING DIFFICULTY WORK SHEET

(GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS ON PAGE FOUR)

Book Title The Little Lion Author Dave Quail

Computation by Barbara Hunt Date 5-9-61

WORKSHEET NO. 1 — SENTENCE DIFFICULTY

COL. 1	COLUMN 2	COL. 3	COL. 4
1			
2			
3	✓✓	2	6
4	✓✓✓✓✓ ✓✓	7	28
5	✓✓✓✓✓ ✓	6	30
6	✓✓✓✓ ✓✓	7	42
7	✓✓✓✓	4	28
8	✓✓	2	16
9	✓✓	2	18
10			
11	✓	1	11
12	✓	1	12
13			
14			
15			
16			
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36			
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38			
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41			
42			
43			
44			
45			
46			
47			
48			
49			
50			
Total number of sentences in the sampling is.....		32	191
Total number of words in the sampling is.....			191

SUMMARY OF RESULTS COPIED FROM BOTH WORKSHEETS	GRADED READING DIFFICULTY
Hard Words (square N)	3
Middle Sentence Length (square D)	1
"Long Sentence" (with 10% as long or longer) (square H)	below 1

Column 1 shows the number of words in the sentence.

Column 2 contains a check for every sentence in the sampling, placed opposite the number of words in the sentence.

Column 3 is the total number of checks opposite each sentence length or number of sentences in the group.

Column 4 is column 3 times column 1, or the total number of words in each group of sentences.

The total of Column 3 gives the total number of sentences in the sampling.

The total of Column 4 gives the total number of words in the sampling. This number is needed for Worksheet No. 2 on Word Difficulty. (Square L)

The total number of sentences in sampling is.....	A.	32
This total divided by 2 is.....	B.	16
Find the middle sentence by counting number B from top of table. The number of words in the middle sentence is.....	C.	6
From the standards table at the bottom of Worksheet 2, the middle sentence Grade Difficulty is Grade	D.	1
The Total number of sentences in sampling is.....	E.	32
This total divided by 10 is.....	F.	3.2
Find the Long Sentence by counting the number F from the bottom of the table. The number of words in the Long Sentence is.....	G.	9
From the standards table at the bottom of Worksheet 2, the Long Sentence Grade Difficulty is Grade	H.	below 1

Designed by E. W. Dolch, Professor of Education, University of Illinois
The Garrard Press, Publishers, Champaign, Illinois Printed in U. S. A.

THE FIRST THOUSAND WORDS FOR CHILDREN'S READING

bout
bove
cross
ccident
che
ct
ddress
fraid
fter
fternoon
gain
gainst
go
ir
irplane
ll
lmost
lone
long
lready
lso
lways
m
n
nd
ngry
nimal
nother
nswer
nt
ny
nything
pple
re
rm
round
s
sk
t
te
unt
utomobile
wake
way

aby
ack
ad
ag
ake
all
alloon
anana
and
andage
ank
ark
arn
asket
ath
athe
e
eans

bear
beat
beautiful
because
bed
bee
been
before
began
begin
begun
behind
believe
bell
belong
bend
beside
best
better
between
bicycle
big
bill
bird
birthday
bit
bite
black
blackboard
bleed
bless
blind
blood
blow
blue
board
boat
body
bone
book
born
both
bottle
bottom
bow
bowl
box
boy
branch
brave
bread
break
breakfast
brick
bridge
bright
bring
broke
broken
broom
brother
brought
brown
bug

build
building
built
bump
burn
burnt
bus
busy
but
butcher
butterfly
butter
button
buy
by

cake
calf
call
came
camp
can
candy
cap
captain
car
card
care
careful
careless
carry
case
cat
catch
cause
cent
center
chain
chair
chalk
chance
change
cheek
chicken
chief
child
children
chimney
chin
chocolate
choose
Christmas
church
circle
circus
city
class
clean
clear
climb
clock
close
cloth
clothes

cloud
clown
coal
coat
cocoa
cold
color
come
company
cook
cooky
cool
copy
corn
corner
cost
cough
could
count
country
course
cousin
cover
cow
crackers
crayons
cream
creek
cross
crowd
crown
cry
cup
cupboard
curtain
cut

dance
danger
dark
date
day
dead
dear
deep
deer
dentist
desk
did
die
different
dig
dime
dining
dinner
dirt
dirty
dish
do
doctor
does
dog
doll
dollar

done
don't
door
double
down
draw
drawer
dream
dress
drink
drive
drop
drug
dry
duck
dust

each
ear
early
earth
east
Easter
easy
eat
edge
egg
eight
either
elephant
eleven
fur
else
empty
end
engine
enough
eraser
even
evening
ever
every
everything
except
expect
eye

face
fair
fall
family
far
farm
farmer
fast
fat
father
feather
feed
feel
feet
fell
fellow
felt
fence

few
field
fight
fill
find
fine
finger
finish
fire
first
fish
fit
five
fix
flag
floor
flower
fly
follow
food
foot
for
forget
forgot
fork
forth
found
four
fresh
friend
frog
from
front
fruit
full
funny
furniture

game
garage
garden
gate
gave
get
gift
girl
give
glad
glass
go
goes
going
gold
golden
gone
good
goodbye
got
grade
grain
grandfather
grandmother
grass
gray
great
green
grew
grocery
ground

grow
guess

had
hair
half
hall
hammer
hand
handkerchief
hang
happy
hard
has
hat
have
he
head
hear
heard
heart
heavy
hello
help
hen
her
here
herself
hid
hide
high
hill
him
himself
his
hit
hold
hole
home
hope
horse
hot
hour
house
how
hundred
hung
hungry
hunt
hurry
hurt

I
ice
if
in
indoors
inside
instead
into
iron
is
it
its

juice
jump
just

keep
kept

kick
kill
kind
king
kiss
kitchen
kitten
knee
knew
knife
knock
know

lady
laid
lake
lamb
lamp
land
lap
large
last
late
laugh
lay
lead
leaf
learn
leather
leave
leaves
led
left
leg
lemonade
lesson
let
letter
lettuce
lie
lift
light
like
line
lion
lip
listen
little
live
load
long
look
lost
lot
loud
love
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wrap
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wrong

yard
year
yellow
yes
yesterday
yet
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young
your

zipper

WORKSHEET NO. 2

Word Difficulty

Column 5 shows number of words in the sentence that are **not** on the list of The First Thousand Words in Children's Reading. (Not including proper names.)

Column 6 contains a check for each sentence in the sampling, placed opposite the number of words in that sentence **not** in the First Thousand.

Column 7 is the product of the number in Column 5 and the number of checks in Column 6.

5	6	7
1	✓✓✓✓✓✓✓✓✓	9
2	✓✓✓	6
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		
9		
10		
11		
12		
13		
14		
15		
16		
17		
18		
19		
20		

Total words in sampling NOT in First Thousand (Total of Column 7)	K.	15
Total number of words in the sampling (from Worksheet No. 1, Column 4)	L.	191
K divided by L gives the Percent of Hard Words	M.	8%
This percentage gives a Graded Word Difficulty of Grade (see standards below)	N.	3

STANDARDS OF GRADED READING DIFFICULTY

	Grade I	II	III	IV	V	VI
Hard Words (Not on first 1,000 List).	2%	4%	8%	12%	14%	16%
Sentence Length in Words						
Middle Sentence	6	9	12	13	14	15
"Long Sentence" 10% as long or longer)	12	16	20	23	26	29

APPENDIX D

NEA ELEMENTARY INSTRUCTIONAL SERVICE

ARTICLE ON INDIVIDUALIZED READING

NEA Elementary Instructional Service

November
1958

INDIVIDUALIZED READING

THE SEARCHLIGHT *of inquiry and evaluation is focused on individualized reading, a term used interchangeably with self-selected, free-directed, and free-choice reading. The materials used in this plan of teaching reading extend beyond the closely graded books of a basic series. A large number of books covering a wide range of interests and levels of reading ability are made available, and children select the story or book which they want to learn to read. Many teachers are discovering that this seems to provide the motivation essential to accomplishment of any skill. Four additional characteristics distinguish this program: objectives, teacher qualifications, class organization, procedural patterns and reading materials.*

OBJECTIVES

The objectives underlying individualized reading are:

—more readers who read more extensively with pleasure and purpose

—lowered resistance to reading through providing increased emotional security and satisfaction

—freedom from boredom and elimination of face-saving disinterest in books

—minimal frustration caused by time limits and unfair competition

—increased satisfaction and motivation

—equal opportunity to attain capacity achievement at individual maximum speed

—development of the child's sense of personal responsibility for himself and for others

—growth of the child's sense of personal worth.

TEACHER QUALIFICATIONS

The teacher's role is to act as organizer and as an unfailing resource for each child in the classroom. The following teaching qualifications contribute to success in the program:

—successful teaching experience

—a thorough understanding of the total concept of reading and child development

—knowledge of children's literature

—ability to organize

—information on the accessibility of materials

—teaching maturity which recognizes each personality in a class as a potential teacher of his peers

—ability to evaluate critically and find ways of overcoming blocks which impede the smooth performance and effectiveness of the program.

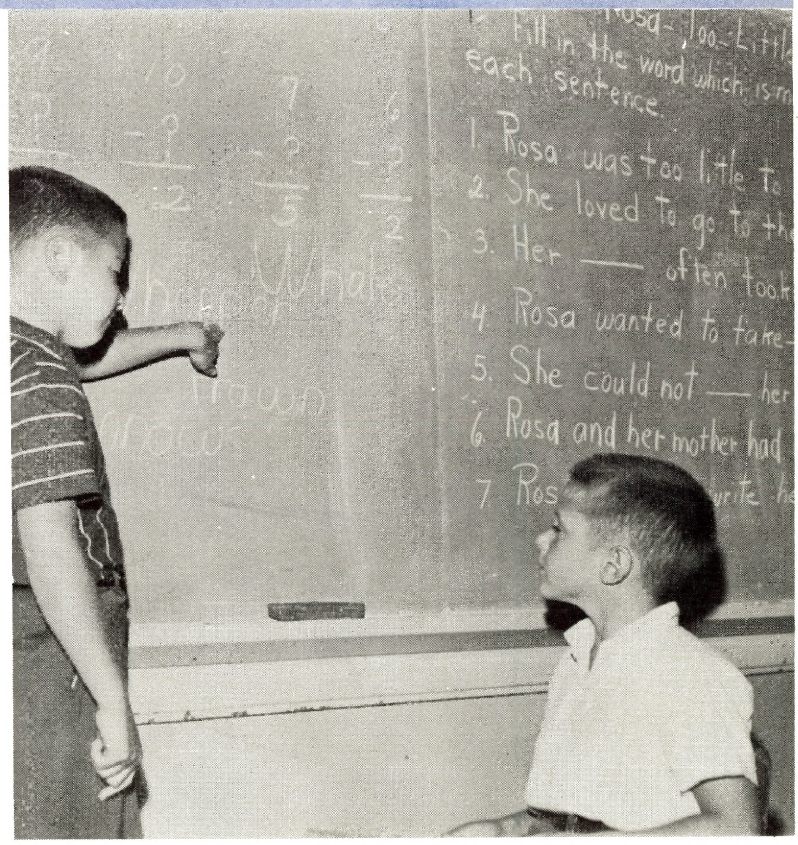
As with all teaching the key figure is the teacher. Classrooms which scintillate with a zeal for learning, a love of books, and a variety of interests present the best environment. The environment reflects the teacher.

THE CLASSROOM ORGANIZATION . . .

A large block of time during the school day is set aside for reading. During this period all children are reading or engaged in some related activity.

Some are reading silently. Others may be busy selecting their next book.

Groups of two or more may be scattered about the room or working together at the chalkboard.



The teacher may be working with one child or a small group, checking their reading or teaching specific skills.

Some are consulting a file of book cards to learn who is responsible for checking the book they have just completed.

One child or a small group may be reading in an audience situation. Here and there a child is busy writing a résumé or a special report.

. . . this is the picture of a busy, purposeful classroom. The sound of physical movement and many voices is a part of an individualized reading program.

TEACHING TECHNIQUES . . .

Teachers qualified to undertake an individualized reading program must already have a thorough understanding of skills involved in teaching reading . . . however, these suggestions implement such a program:

CHECKING

The teacher must keep informed on the progress of each child. If the book is not too long and has continuity, comprehension is measured at first by unaided *oral recall,* the pupil recounting the action in the story. In individual cases aided recall is needed. This can be done through leading questions, and use of chapter headings or the table of contents.

The skills are functionally taught as help is given on the unknown words listed by the child.

Oral reading is checked. The amount of oral reading for an individual book and child is governed by the child's skill with word attack, his general comprehension, and upon the teacher's knowledge of the child's reading level. More oral reading is usually required when the reader is progressing slowly.

Personal checking of each child by the teacher at the completion of each book can create a bottleneck. To avoid such a breakdown, pupil-checkers are sometimes used. The first child to complete a book is checked by the teacher and becomes the pupil-checker of that book, if the teacher is assured that the child is qualified to assume this responsibility. Thereafter, any child reading this book is first checked by the designated pupil-checker, using the procedure followed by the teacher.

The teacher then quickly reviews the book with the reader and determines whether it can be added to the child's reading record. This is a short, final appraisal. It includes testing the mastery of the new vocabulary on the child's list, a leading question or two (usually interpretive rather than factual), and oral phrase-reading throughout the book. It serves a dual purpose: to check on the thoroughness of the checker's job, and to give the new reader the satisfaction of personal attention and approval by the teacher. There is one pupil-checker for each book but every child who reads the book and passes the checktest records the book. A plus value of this technique is the functional review of the book for the checker.

THE READING RECORD

The reading record is a measure of each child's reading during the school year. A book is recorded by the child in his reading record when he has mastered the core vocabulary, knows the contents, and can read the book with acceptable fluency. Books from public libraries or brought from home and shared with the class may be added to this list. Such books are checked and are marked to distinguish them from those actually read in the classroom. Books which are read in groups for the development of skills may also be recorded.

The teacher uses this individual record for diagnostic study. Above all its shows progress. It discloses the static readers who, through emo-

tional or ability blocks, find security in reading books which exclude the possibility of failure. This points up teaching and guidance needs.

To the parent the record is documentary evidence of progress and achievement, if such evidence is not already apparent. This makes for greater tolerance and support for both the program and the child.

USE OF SETS OF BOOKS

Much individual reading is, of course, done in such areas as science and social studies, but learnings are extended and concepts clarified through discussion, visual aids, first-hand experiences, special reports, and experiments. These are usually total class activities. Frequently, sets of the same books are used as a common background, supplemented by much individual reading for enrichment. Sets of basic readers are effectively used in group sessions when common materials would expedite teaching or evaluation of skills.

THE BOOK FILE

When the reading of a book is completed, the child needs to know to whom he must go to have it checked. To learn this the "book file" is consulted. Only books checked by the teacher are recorded alphabetically in the file. The name of the pupil-checker is written under the title of the book. If the title is not in the file, the pupil knows the book must be checked by the teacher.

AUDIENCE READING

One useful purpose of audience reading is to promote wider reading. Resourcefulness and ingenuity of the teacher must be used to exploit and extend the benefits of the great variety of reading being done in a classroom. From the reading records, the teacher finds the number of different pupils who have read a given book. These form a group and, through oral reading, discussion, and retelling, they share the book with the remaining children who, through lack of interest or confidence, have not read it. This acquaints all the boys and girls with a variety of stories and encourages individual children to reach out for books, frequently on an ever-increasing level of difficulty.

As the book is being read orally, the teacher lists the potentially troublesome words or phrases on the blackboard and, just before the group disbands, attention is directed to the list. The contact with the book just read orally facilitates familiarity with these words and phrases and they no longer pose a threat to those whose interest has been caught through hearing the story.

ORIENTATION TO THE PROGRAM

The first month of the new school year is one of adjustment for both child and teacher—a period when the teacher must learn the emotional and social reactions of each child to the specific environment, as well as the learning capacity and level of achievement of each.

Readiness for participation in the approaching individualized reading program must be measured and strengthened. This may come through working with one child or with groups on reading skills. Free reading time is part of the daily routine and is used by the teacher to observe reactions and actual readiness to practice free choice in reading. Lack of experience and lack of ability in the child are the two major obstacles at the start of the program. Children who have difficulty in selecting a book which can be read without undue tension must have encouragement and help to overcome this inadequacy. This same group will probably need guidance and encouragement to read the books of their choice. The best way to approach this problem seems to be through firm and insistent suggestion, when it has been determined that the selected book is readable for the child.

Before the individualized reading program is finally put into operation each child must have had experience with all phases of the procedure—personal selection, checking, and recording. He must understand his responsibilities and the purposes they serve.

Each child knows that he can choose the books he reads. He understands that he must assume the responsibility for reading a chosen book. Part of this responsibility is the listing (while reading) of any words which he cannot get phonetically or through picture or context clues. This allows the child to venture without fear into books he is interested in reading. The understanding is firmly established that each book read must be checked for comprehension, vocabulary mastery, and fluency of oral reading before it can become part of his reading record.

At the end of the orientation period, every boy and girl has had an introduction and adequate practice to acquaint him with all aspects of the new experience . . .

- Each child is able and free to choose independently a book which he can really read.
- Each child, with varying degrees of independence, has had practice in making a genuine effort to read a book.
- All children have had a great deal of opportunity to become familiar with the available books.
- All children have, through direct teaching in small groups, been given instruction in the skills involved in reading.

TYPES OF BOOKS USED

Materials for an individualized reading program may be drawn from books which are loosely termed "trade books," as distinguished from those specifically described as text books or basic texts. Single story content in adult format seems most suitably adapted to individualized reading. Books should cover a wide variety of subjects and may be secured from the school and public libraries, bookmobiles, and the children's personal libraries. Books are carefully screened and are frequently changed so there is always something new and tantalizing for the "choosy" ones.

The teacher, as organizer, must be sure that at any one time books range in difficulty (vocabulary and concept) from those at a level of independent reading for the child achieving the least, to those at the instructional level for the one with superior ability. The teacher must be aware of the varied interests of the pupils and carefully check, in terms of these interests, the books available for selection.

Stories for a child reading at a first or second-grade level must be relatively short and have visual and asthetic appeal. The titles should be simple and easy to read. At this level of achievement interests are immediate and satisfactions are urgently needed. Reading material which will interest, challenge, and increase actual reading ability should be made available to all pupils.

RESULTS REPORTED BY TEACHERS

more and better readers . . .

reading more . . .

with greater pleasure and purpose.

. . . individual reading has been used with children having a range of reading ability extending from low second-grade level up to and including an adult level.
. . . the program picks up momentum as the year passes.
. . . it becomes almost entirely self-motivated.
. . . reading becomes elected.
. . . reading records show an increased volume of reading including fiction, travel, history, biography, science, biology, poetry.
. . . in place of oral recall, children write reviews and reports involving spelling and writing power far beyond what is usually expected.
. . . this method of teaching reading was successfully used at the start of the year with a heterogenous group of second graders including a little German child who could speak, understand, or read almost nothing; several children whose sight vocabulary consisted of less than 20 words; and a percentage of emotionally disturbed children who, before and during the year, had been and continued to be under psychiatric or psychological guidance.

Teachers from widely scattered areas (Philadelphia, Tucson, St. Louis, and Greenville County, S. C.) have reported their experiences with individual reading in *Elementary English Journal*, *Instructor*, *Childhood Education*, and *Educational Leadership*.

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